

MY WIFE'S NEW FRIEND.

BY SMITH JONES, JR.



Mrs. Jones has quite a habit of cultivating sudden friendships, which have every appearance of blooming eternally, but which soon wither in the world's cold blasts. I used to think this characteristic was confined to school-girls, who swear immortal fidelity in letters crossed and re-crossed, but forget each other as soon as they have caught a lover.

My wife's last acquisition, in the way of a bosom friend, is Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray, with whom she became acquainted last summer, while we were boarding out of town. Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray had her carriage with her, and created quite a sensation: in fact, every lady in the house was eager to become her confidant; but the amiable deportment of Mrs. Jones, combined, I doubt not, with her intellectual accomplishments, rendered her the favorite; and she it was who daily occupied the spare seat in the coach, and had the honor of advising Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray in those thousand grave perplexities under which women suffer.

We returned to the city after the Mowbrays, but my wife, though usually very firm on questions of etiquette, waived her privileges on this occasion, and made the first call. She was graciously received, and came home in high spirits. All that evening she could do nothing but talk of Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray. "Such an elegant establishment," she said. "A footman, with manners like a prince, waited at the door. The drawing-room was the perfection of luxury and taste. Mrs. Mowbray had on such a sweet cap, and altogether looked so lady-like. Her manners were, indeed, most aristocratic, just what one would suppose those of a countess to be."

In a few days, Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray returned my wife's call, coming in a shining new carriage, and with a new span of horses. Her equipage created quite a sensation in our street.

Mrs. Jones, soon after this, began to act as if brooding over some vast design, which not being yet quite matured, she deemed it wisest to be silent respecting. At last, however, the mighty secret was broached.

"I was thinking, Jones," she said, one night, just as I was composing myself to sleep on my pillow, "that we ought to give a party. Not a regular ball, indeed, but a select entertainment, where a few congenial minds may be brought

together. I should like to introduce my dear Mrs. Mowbray to some of the choicest of our set."

Now I detest parties, small or large, but as the delicacy of my wife's nerves does not allow of her being thwarted, I made no objection to this proposal, though I sighed to myself.

"Of course, my dear," I said. "You know best."

"We'll ask about thirty," continued my wife, warming with the subject. "There's Mrs. Wharton, and Mrs. Horace Shinn, and Mrs. Price, and the three Misses Trelawneys," and thus the dear creature ran on, until she had mentioned about forty names, and I saw that her "select party of congenial souls" was going to be, after all, a crowded rout.

"You have forgotten the two Misses Howell," I said, at last, when my wife stopped for want of breath.

The two Misses Howell were amiable, intelligent and pretty girls, in whom I took a particular interest, because their father had once been an extensive shipping merchant, but having become reduced and died bankrupt, the sisters were compelled to earn a livelihood by standing in a store. They had numerous rich relations on whom they might have billeted themselves, but, with a spirit of proper independence, they preferred to work for their maintenance, instead of eating the bread of charity. I had long nourished a romantic idea of seeing them married well, and had consequently made it a point always to invite them to our parties; to praise them highly to the young gentlemen there; and, in every other indirect way, to assist in realizing my pet scheme.

My wife, heretofore had seconded me in my benevolent plan; but on the present occasion, she hesitated to reply; and I knew, at once, that there was something the matter.

"Ahem!" she said, at last, clearing her throat. "Ahem! The Misses Howell are very nice girls to be sure—that is, in their place—but as it is to be a select party, and as I have already mentioned rather too many, and as Mrs. Mowbray may not want to meet all sorts of people, and as——"

"Stop, my dear," said I, with a sigh, for I saw that my favorites were not to be invited, "you have given reasons enough. It is a great pity,

though." And I sighed again—a sigh eloquent of passive resignation.

My wife heard my sighs, and her tender heart was touched. She paused a moment in embarrassment, and perhaps even revolved the idea of yielding to my wishes, but, in the end, she raised herself on her elbow, and said:

"Mr. Jones, do listen to reason. You don't know how foolish you make yourself about those Howell girls. They've been unfortunate to be sure; and they're very passable, indeed; but there's a prejudice, you are aware, against girls who stand in stores; and who knows but what Mrs. Mowbray would take offence at my inviting such persons to meet her. I shouldn't like to do it; indeed, without first asking her; and I can't do that this time. She's very particular, and so excessively high-bred."

"Then I don't think she'd regard you the less, my dear," I ventured to say, "for being acquainted with two such excellent girls as Patty and Lizzy Howell."

"Mr. Jones, don't be a child," replied my wife, flinging herself to the other side of the bed. "At your age you should know something of the world. Exclusive people, like Mrs. Mowbray, don't care to meet nobodies. She was very choice, as you saw, whom she admitted to her acquaintance this summer: I may say, indeed, that I am the only one, of all she met, whom she recognizes now."

To have protracted the conversation would have excited my wife's nerves, and deprived her of sleep, so I said no more, but closed my eyes and courted slumber anew. I have no recollection of anything after that, till I woke the next morning, and leaving Mrs. Jones a bed, as usual, went down to see that the fires were right, and to do the marketing while breakfast was being prepared.

The invitations to the party were issued that week, Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray graciously promising to attend.

When the important evening arrived, my wife was all nerves. At every ring of the bell, the color rose to her face with expectation, but guest after guest entered without Mrs. Mowbray appearing. Her nervousness soon began to change to anxiety, and this, as the hours wore on, to disappointment and dismay. She delayed the supper for a full hour, thinking that her new friend might yet arrive; but in vain.

"What can be the matter, I wonder," she said to me, as soon as we were alone. "I hope the dear babe is well. Perhaps, however, Mrs. Mowbray is herself sick. Dear me, I am afraid I shall not sleep for anxiety. The first thing I'll do tomorrow will be to call on Mrs. Mowbray and see what is the matter."

"Wouldn't that be against etiquette?" I ventured to ask. "It seems to me that Mrs. Mowbray should send you a note, or message, or something of that sort, at least, to apologize for her absence."

Mrs. Jones did not reply in words, but she gave me a look. And *such* a look! It expressed all the indignation, which her outraged bosom felt, at having the slightest suspicion cast upon her friend.

When I came home to dinner that day, I saw, at a glance, that something had occurred to ruffle my wife's nerves. She had nothing whatever to say to me, but she scolded the servants and children incessantly. I was too wise to inquire what was wrong. I knew that Mrs. Jones, if she thought proper, would tell me; and, if not, that idle questions would only aggravate her secret troubles.

But, the next day, having heard something that cast light on Mrs. Mowbray's absence from our party, I could not contain myself when I came home.

"Did you ever hear, my love," I said, as I began to carve the turkey, at dinner, "that the Misses Howell had a married sister?"

Mrs. Jones looked sharply up, as if she suspected I meant more than I said: and then answered laconically:

"I heard it casually, but never asked further."

"It seems," I continued, "that Mrs. Mortimer Mowbray is that sister."

"I've heard so since," said Mrs. Jones, sharply; and turning to our second child, who was asking for the wing-bone, she rapped him over the head, exclaiming, tartly, "haven't I told you to wait till you're helped? Take that, now, and learn manners."

I allowed a minute and more to elapse, in order that my wife's ebullition might subside, when I remarked:

"Mrs. Mowbray, it seems, expected to meet her sisters here."

"I shouldn't wonder if she did," snappishly said Mrs. Jones, looking down in her plate, and apparently absorbed in parting a wing-joint.

"When she found," I continued, "that her sisters were not asked, she grew indignant. She heard the reason, it seems. Your friend, Mrs. Wharton, whom you had made a confidant, told some lady, who told her; and hence her anger."

"I am sure I don't care if I ever see the proud thing again," said my wife, reddening very much; but still without looking up. "One could not have supposed that *she* was a sister to the Misses Howell."

After another pause, I said:

"Did you call on Mrs. Mowbray, as you intended?"

Mrs. Jones was silent for a full minute, and seemed half disposed to decline answering altogether: but finally she blurted out her reply, as follows.

“Yes, I did, since you must know. And she wasn’t in. So, at least, the footman said, but if I didn’t see her at the drawing-room window,” and here she burst into tears of mortification and rage, “may I never eat another mouthful.”

I saw that it would not do to continue the conversation: so I quietly ate my dinner, kissed the children, and, like Christian in the Pilgrim’s Progress, “went my way.”

Of course the intimacy of my wife with Mrs. Mowbray ceased from the date of that fatal party; and, I am sorry to say, that the Misses Howell also have, as the phrase goes, “cut our acquaintance.”

THE LOVE LETTER; OR, TREASON IN FLOWERS.

BY ANN S. STEPHENS.

TALK about the dark eyed beauties of Italy and Spain, why you can any day, when the sun shines softly and the air is bland, find more real beauty in Broadway or Chesnut street than can be mustered in a month either in Seville, Florence or Naples. In the youth and first bloom of life, American girls are more beautiful than any race on earth. They have a delicate, classical, nay, altogether exquisite sort of loveliness unsurpassed by anything in continental Europe. They know it, too, the pretty rogues; and it would quite amuse you to see the coquettish little airs and graces they (some of them, not all) assume before foreigners, especially foreigners who have titles and wear decorations. Perhaps out of the numbers that travel abroad one might find a fair representation of the female loveliness of the land, though I have seen thousands of beautiful American women at home where one can be found on her travels.

Now and then, however, one sees upon the Chiaja at Naples, on the Corso at Rome, or driving in the suburbs of Florence, a form so exquisite in its loveliness, a face so delicate and yet so rich in bloom, that it quite makes you start with a home feeling, for there is no mistaking such faces. Italy, France and Spain each has its own style of beauty, but there is no possibility of fancying it American for a moment. The female loveliness of our country has all the delicacy and bloom of a spring blossom, not the less interesting that you feel how short, like that blossom, will be its durability.

One of these faces beamed upon the pleasure-seekers of Naples one season. Almost every day as the public drives began to fill, you might have seen a light, open carriage, drawn by a pair of fine bays, dashing up and down the gay thoroughfare. In the back seat sat a lady in

second mourning, and rather beyond the middle age, with a little King Charles spaniel in her lap, and a grave, and very lovely girl of three or four-and-twenty by her side.

A nice, pleasant old lady she seemed to be, with her bland face beaming with kindness, and her comfortable person filling more than a fair portion of the carriage. There were remnants of previous beauty, too, in that face; a glimmer of lost dimples hovering about the cheek; and glimpses of sunshine sparkling yet in the brown eyes, that reminded you how lovely her youth must have been, as a winter apple brings thoughts of the blossom that still leaves a shadow of itself about the core.

In the front seat, and almost always directly before the elder lady, sat the young girl of whose beauty we have been speaking, so delicate, so bright and spring-like, that her resemblance to one of the heads in Guido's *Aurora* was the constant remark of those who had seen those glorious frescoes.

Of course, I need not say that Ella White's hair was lustrous with that beautiful golden gleam which this great master seems to have painted from the sunshine—that her eyes were of no permanent color, but changing and sparkling till you scarcely knew, when her long lashes drooped over them, what would be their hue when the silken fringe was lifted again. Nor did her beauty consist in regularity of features, so far as the beholder could tell, for it was very seldom that the features were sufficiently in repose for a fair judgment, but a glowing, transparent complexion, a bright, happy look, happy almost to recklessness, were elements of beauty, sufficiently in contrast to the Neapolitan style, to insure very earnest admiration on their own account.

The likeness and yet contrast, too, which existed between Ella White and the other fair girl in the back seat drew considerable attention. The one so fair, so reserved and impenetrable, with a shade even of sadness on her fine face—the other brilliant and sparkling as a sunbeam, and yet with a family likeness running through and losing itself as it were in the comely person of the elder lady—all this had been a subject of speculation to the hunters of the Villa Reale during the last month. But in all European towns, haunted by travellers, gossip has a swifter wing even than in a home city, and it was soon known in every hotel along the crescent of that magnificent bay, that Mrs. White was a widow, with a daughter and niece, making a continental tour, and to this were added whispers about great wealth and a foreign engagement for one of the young ladies, if not both, with various other things not quite so well founded in fact, but certainly not the less interesting for that.

Well, as I have said, the Chiaja began to fill with equipages. The soft, rosy purple of an Italian twilight was gently stealing over the bay, and the air was fragrant with the breath of a thousand flowers that swept down from the rose thickets of Capo di Monte, and the terraced gardens that overhang the crescent-like curve of the drive. Mingled with this was a faint odor of orange blossoms, borne across the waters from beautiful Sarentum, whose white walls might just be discerned through the purple distance.

Still the twilight had not yet deepened into the sad hours when tears always seem lingering about the heart, and Ella White, though peculiarly susceptible to the influence of everything sweet or grand in nature, kept up a most brilliant flow of spirits, now glancing at a carriage with sparkling and eager eyes—now allowing her gaze to range down the green vistas of the Villa Reale—now exchanging a gay smile, or waving her pretty hand to some passenger who lifted his hat to her party from the side walk. Nothing could be more evident—Ella was expecting some one. Something nearer her little heart than the gay throng of carriages that swept by, gave that glow to her cheek and that sparkle to her eyes. The Cousin Maria looked over, and a sly, knowing little smile stole across her lips. Mrs. White smiled, too, but in an indolent, good-natured way, which was not likely to bring a tinge of warmer blood into Ella's cheek.

They had followed the crescent of the bay up to that point of high land which gives you the whole of Naples at a glance, with Capri slumbering in the golden haze which pours down the horizon, and green, gloomy old Vesuvius vomiting clouds of black smoke into the beautiful sunset, rising directly opposite, a severe

contrast to the heavenly world smiling at its foot. Even this magnificent scene had no power to win Ella White from the object that pre-occupied her mind.

"Come, come, mamma," she said, drawing the velvet folds of her purple mantilla over the dress of pure muslin that harmonized so sweetly with the climate and the scene, "the air is getting bleak here; remember, this is the sunset hour, so dangerous for strangers."

"Yes," said Maria, with a demure smile, "we should be much safer walking along the Villa Reale. Ella never suffers with a night chill there."

"No, no, Ella is right," observed Mrs. White, gathering up the folds of her cashmere shawl with a half-shudder, "the scene is beautiful enough, but we shall all be safer in the hotel."

This was not quite the effect that Ella had anticipated from her little manœuvre.

"Oh, but it is only on the high ground," she said, "that one feels in the least chilly. The gardens are so sheltered and so full of trees, one has no chance of taking cold there; besides, the statues look so beautiful in the soft light—the rosy sunset takes away all that cold, dead look which clings to the marble—then, in the moonlight, oh, mamma, you should see them in the moonlight."

"Why, child, where did *you* see them by moonlight, pray?"

It was seldom that Mrs. White put a question so directly, and with that air. Ella blushed crimson, and cast an imploring look on her cousin, who was smiling with a sort of quiet motion behind her snowy sun-shade.

"Oh, that night we dined at the ambassador's, you know, aunt, Ella and I walked home through the gardens," said Maria, after a moment's provoking delay.

"Yes, I remember," said the elder lady. "Let me see; who was that very handsome young man that insisted upon walking home with you that night, though I told him the courier was quite protection enough—who was he?"

Mrs. White looked directly at Ella as she spoke; and it struck her that the beautiful girl was quite as much affected by the sunset as the statues she had been describing, for the blush upon her cheeks was like the glow of a ripe peach. "Oh, that—that was the marquis—cousin, do you remember the title?"

"No matter, child, no matter; if he only *has* a title, it is sufficient," said the mother, complacently.

"He has not only a title, aunt, but is high in the king's favor; one of his council, I believe," said Maria, in her usual low tone.

"Ah!" said Mrs. White, who was far more

frank in such matters than many of her compatriots, who openly decry the aristocracy of Europe and meanly worship it at the same time, "it would be something to take my daughter back to the United States a marchioness, a real lady! What would the Hopkinses say to that?"

"Mother," exclaimed the young girl, with a sparkle of the eye, and a glow upon her cheek far more fiery than the red that had just left it, "you forget of what country and faith we are. How many times, too, my dear, dear papa, who is dead—how many times has he told me that to be a true American was title enough for any man or woman, for it was the title of a freeman!"

"Ah, yes, your father was very singular, very republican in his ideas," replied the mother, with a look of annoyance, "but we ladies have our own way of thinking, especially such of us as have seen the world."

"My father got his opinions from a brave old stock, mother. If pedigree is worth anything, he might indeed have boasted, his father's father was a soldier in the Revolution."

"An officer, you mean, child—an officer."

"No, mother, I never heard that he was an officer, but a soldier, and a good one he was, my blessed father has told me so a thousand times. I remember crying myself ill, when a little child, over the stories he would tell me of that fearful old Jersey ship, where our ancestors suffered so much."

"Hush, child, hush; I tell you, he was an officer. Look yonder! are you ambitious of claiming descent from a thing like that?"

Mrs. White pointed to one of the hireling soldiers that stand sentinel along the Chiaja.

"A thing like that," said Ella, and an expression of ineffable scorn curled her beautiful mouth. "Was there anything like that in the American Revolution?"

"Why, a common soldier is a common soldier the world over."

"No, mother, *that* man is a common soldier, body and soul, he is at the bidding of another, bought and sold for so much money—his life, his blood, his very soul is a matter of bargain; but in our Revolution every soldier was a patriot. No man sold himself there."

Ella broke off suddenly, for two gentlemen passing slowly along the drive wheeled their horses and rode up to the carriage, one curbing his steed to a short canter, and resting one white gloved hand on the side of the carriage as he paid his respects to the ladies within.

The other, less familiar, contented himself with a more quiet recognition; but a single glance passed between him and Ella, which brought the blood somewhat warmly into her cheek, and with some sort of magic, a tuft of the

most fragrant violets fell into her lap, it might be, from one of the dozen flower-girls that haunt the entrance of every fashionable hotel in Naples; or it might be—how useless to go on. You could see by Ella's cheek, by the diamond-like sparkle that shot through her long lashes, that she had no flower-girl in her mind.

When Ella reached the Vittaria, which commands the principal entrance of the Villa Reale, the violets lay within the muslin folds that covered her bosom, and with a bright smile, hailing the signal as if it had been a star, the young Italian rode away, leaving his companion, who had officiously dismounted, to attend the ladies. As this man handed Maria from the carriage, a whisper passed between them, and the young lady looked toward her aunt. Rossi instantly addressed the elder lady, in that soft, broken English that sounds to us interesting, as the first efforts of a child at speech.

"Oh, madam, not one turn in the grounds. See how beautiful the evening is."

Mrs. White was very indolent, and like most good-natured people of inert temperament, reluctant to make the least personal sacrifice. Had the Villa Reale been the pleasantest valley in Paradise, a thing it very much resembled, she could not have been tempted into the delicious haze that flooded the statues, the trees, and the glorious water beyond, like a shower of sifted gold.

Mrs. White shook her head.

"But the young ladies?" entreated the Italian, as only a child of the sweet south can entreat.

"Oh, do mamma," murmured Ella, "the courier, you know, can follow us."

"Well, well, but do be careful about taking cold. Remember what we were just saying of the night air," and Mrs. White passed into her hotel, conscious that she was allowing a great impropriety, but soothing down her scruples with thoughts of the Italian marquis who was to be propitiated, and pleading the privileges of her own country, where this little escapade of the girls would have been no impropriety at all.

Meantime, Ella White and her cousin were inhaling the mingled breath of roses, heliotrope, jasmines and violets that flooded over them from a thousand flower-beds and blooming thickets in the beautiful promenade; here the shadow of a statue fell, like the reflection of a living thing, across their path; now the slender columns of some pretty temple, lovely mimic of the still lovelier clime of Greece, gleamed out from its drapery of rich vines. The golden haze that had been so warmly rich a little before, was now softened down by the cool gleams of a rising moon. Never was there an hour or place so full of all that made the glory of Paradise. Never

since Eve saw her own pure beauty reflected back by the fountain, had the moon lighted up a more heavenly face than that of Ella White. She was leaning upon the arm of Marini, for that was the title which Mrs. White was so curious about. Her eyes were lifted to his face, her mouth was warm with smiles; the soft wind swept the curls in and out from under her pretty bonnet, with such shadow-like wantonness there was no light to bring out the rich color, but one could fancy the golden lustre that was striving to break through the shadows.

There were few persons in the walks, and those few glided quietly amid the trees, conversing in low tones, and avoiding the strangers who were in sight. Ella was conversing with the Italian, low and earnestly. The subject was not entirely of love—there was something too clear and decided for that. Yet an under-current of tenderness ran through her voice that could not be mistaken. She loved the man by her side, but it was as the proud, honorable and high spirited of our nation love, not with the passionate abandon of the Italian woman. All at once Ella's voice was raised in answer to something that the Italian had been saying.

"What would I do—how would I have you act! Rise, and say to this tyrant of Naples that you are no longer his bondman. Go to him, there in his palace, where he sits trembling with fear of the people he has outraged, the ground-floor blocked up with hireling soldiers, the sumptuous prison which he dare not leave unless guarded by a double wall of fighting men—go to him and say, I am honest, frank, a man; there is that within me which revolts at the iron tread with which you crush my nation to the dust; say to him I will no longer be of your council, no longer aid to crush my fellow countrymen, because they deserve to use the birth-right of free thought as God intended them to use it."

"And if I did," answered the Italian, with intense bitterness, turning suddenly, and pointing his finger toward the towers of San Elmo that frowned blackly over the city, "the deepest dungeon up yonder would hold me in less than twenty-four hours." The Italian's face gleamed while in the moonbeams, as he spoke, and a gloomy fire burned in his eyes; all at once he turned suddenly, and clasping his hands, bent his eyes upon the young girl.

"Oh, my heavens, what a country your's must be, where the heart of man may swell and expand with no tyrant's clutch upon its energy. Where a man dare speak and act fearlessly, the feelings that are within him."

"And this land, so beautiful, so written over, as it were, with the language of angels, why should not this land be free as ours? What if

foreign soldiers swarm here by thousands, is not the city full of able-bodied men, each with muscles, sinews, strength that more than equal theirs?"

"But how are these men to be reached—how influenced to throw off the great moral incubus, this abject fear that the government has fastened upon them? Remember, lady, remember that people born and bred under a tyranny are shorn of their strength, cramped, humiliated. Should a George Washington start up in Naples to-day, where would he find the hardy, stern warriors to follow his lead? Passive despair, the energy of madness, these would be the elements offered him wherewith to work out Italian freedom, not the stern, hard, solemn courage that made every man in Washington's army a warrior."

"Such men as Washington give this solemn courage to the people; spirits like his subdue these fiery elements of madness and despair into solemn and persevering energy."

"But *we* have no Washington."

"But you have a Marini."

"What would you say, lady?"

"There is a nation to be made free; a tyrant to be hurled down. I am told by those that know the Neapolitans well, that thousands on thousands of these oppressed people are ready to rise at any moment; but their leaders have been dispersed, they are waiting for the one great spirit which is to concentrate the mighty strength they offer."

"It was these very elements with which Rienzi strove to liberate Rome. With what a mighty strength he used them for a time; but in their recoil they crushed him."

"But how great he was even in defeat and death."

"But was Rome made free?"

"Alas, no! but he who made the glorious effort, how we worship the very name of Rienzi."

"And Marini, if he could rise like the Roman hero to fall like him, would his name be worshipped thus?"

"In one heart it would."

"And you would lament my death?"

"You would not die, the great God of nations will protect you, while engaged in the holy cause of freedom."

"In the last struggle were many brave men engaged, where are they now?"

"In exile, I know many of them were in London, when we visited that city, many in Paris."

"And many," said the Italian, again pointing to the grim towers of San Elmo, "are yonder, buried from human knowledge, close as if the grave covered them. Many are working in the streets all day, chained ankle to ankle with common felons, doing services and living upon

food, from which a hyena would turn with loathing. The King of Naples, finds a punishment more terrible than death, lady, for those who offend against his government. Would your admiration—your sympathy—the worship you speak of, follow a man there, into the sewers and kennels of the city?"

"It would—the felon's dress, would seem to me as robes of purple and gold. From my soul, I should love, nay! worship the man who wore them, more a thousand times for his misfortunes."

The Italian took her clasped hands in his, and pressed them passionately to his lips. He looked into her eyes, they were brimming with tears; her lovely mouth trembled in the moonlight, yet tearful and agitated as her face was, it glowed with enthusiasm.

"Beautiful woman—angel, do you love me?"

"Can you ask? do you not feel the truth in your heart?"

"I belong to you and Naples, now," said the Italian, for the tumult of his passion subsided into a deep, holy swell of joy.

Ella drew a long breath, soft and broken, with that voluptuous interruption which entire happiness gives to a sigh.

They stood opposite each other, he gazing with hushed tenderness upon her face; she struck with sudden embarrassment, her white eyelids both closed, her cheek pale, and her little figure drooping like a willow bough. The patriotism was gone, there was no room in that little heart for anything but the sweet and holy feelings that flooded it, as light fills a crystal vase—still his look embarrassed her—the intensity of her own sensations—the delirious rush of emotions that she had never felt before, enervated her as a full gush of perfume from the orange groves of Sorrento might have done.

"Give me," said the Italian, gently, "give me this night to love, to-morrow I will be all you wish. If I may not free Naples, I can die or suffer for her, only let me feel that in any fortune you will love me."

"In all, in every fortune, trust me, as I trust you."

They walked on absorbed in one another, happy perhaps as two beings ever were on earth. The full moon shed its broad pure light upon them as they passed. The waters that tossed along the beach seemed full of hidden and sweet music, which never reached their ears before. Nothing of gloom was there, save old Vesuvius, rising across the bay in giant blackness, vomiting clouds of smoke that rolled gloomily downward, spreading over the city of the dead, from which it had swept away all human life centuries before. To and fro, to and fro, the smoke from that yawning crater swayed and surged like a pall

torn and weltering in the glorious moonlight, downward it swept along the torn sides of the mountain, creeping like a shadow of the terrible past through the broken walls and silent streets of Pompeii.

San Elmo, too—its towers and battlements were bathed in the moonlight, and flung out in glorious relief by the deep purple of an Italian sky, but nothing had power to brighten its fearful past, or its cruel present. To one who looked beyond the surface, San Elmo was a more terrible object than the fiery mountain. Yet, with these two monuments of eternal and mortal power, looming before them, the lovers were happy. Where is the spot on earth, so full it with gloom or danger if you will, which true affection cannot brighten, or which will not be rendered celestial by a breath of love?

Leave them to their happiness—they see only the flowers that bend upon their dewy stalks, as they pass the soft whispering waters, the moonlight that flags the walk before them with silver. The black pall-like smoke from Vesuvius, what had that to do with their warm vital joy—their glorious youth. Was it not sweeping its sable forth along the city of the dead?

The lovers had forgotten Rossi and his companion, it had been well if they too had been as completely overlooked, for the wily Italian had other and more serious objects of attention, than the infatuated girl who leaned upon his arm. Their language was that of acknowledged lovers, he addressed her by those thousand endearing epithets that the Italian language renders so delicious, and no ear ever thirsted more greedily for the sweet incense, than those into which his protestations were poured. It was infatuation, madness, a wild mixture of vanity, ambition and a dozen hundred passions, that filled the bosom of this wayward girl as she listened. How cold and tame was the most ardent language ever bestowed upon her at home, compared to the adulation of this man, a nobleman too, a favorite of royalty.

All these considerations had their influence upon the girl, sweeping away her principles and blinding her common sense, more effectually than the most earnest love could have done.

They walked on, keeping Marini and Ella in sight almost within hearing, for devoted as Rossi seemed, he watched the young couple with a restless sort of scrutiny that Maria at length observed.

"You are not listening," she said, all at once, "your eyes constantly wander toward my cousin?"

"I was wondering what she could have to say so earnestly. How eager, how ardent she is."

"Ah! Ella is such a republican, I dare say

she is striving to persuade the marquis to throw up his title and follow us to America."

"Let us walk on quietly, her arguments must worth hearing?"

"Oh! it is always her conversation to which you listen, if mine has become so valueless—why not give it up at once."

"Why do I not part with my life—my soul," answered the young man, with every appearance of wounded tenderness. "But how can I be uninterested in your cousin's opinions while they threaten to separate us forever. With her republican ideas will she consent to leave her relative in a land so hateful to freedom as this."

"She has no authority over me!"

"No, but her mother has; and American children have wonderful influence over their parents."

"True, Ella does influence her mamma more than any girl I ever saw," answered Maria.

"Can you wonder, then, that I should be anxious—that I should watch the person who may hold the treasure of my life in her power?"

"No, no, I was wrong," said Maria, entirely subdued. "But Ella has so many attractions—men think her so beautiful—since our childhood she has always stood before me. Where she is, I am sure to be overlooked."

"Not here, not in beautiful Italy could she find preference; why, a thousand eyes have I seen turned upon you when she has passed unnoticed. True, Marini has become a worshipper—watch them, they pause in the walk, absorbed in each other; we are forgotten. Is there no place where we can sit down?"

He drew her toward a marble bench, beneath a clump of acacias, close at hand, and seated himself beside her, still in sight of Ella and her companion. The earnest, nay, excited air, with which they conversed; the raised tone which now and then sent a word to his ear, all seemed to interest Rossi more than the occasion could warrant. After sitting with ill-subdued restlessness by her side a few moments, he started up.

"One moment! excuse me a single moment," he said, and disappeared in a winding path.

Maria kept her eyes fixed upon Ella, for by the side of her fair cousin she expected to see her lover reappear. But she watched in vain. Marini and Ella still remained standing in the moonlit path; thickets and clumps of acacias were on either side, and for an instant, she fancied that a man's shadow fell athwart the path. No, it must have been the waving of a tree bough, for the young people still remained alone.

Ten or fifteen minutes after, Rossi stole softly to her side again—so softly, that he was close by before she was at all conscious of it.

"Pardon, my angel; I must have kept you

waiting," he said, with the most insinuating humility, "but a gentleman met me in the walk, out yonder, as I was taking a little circuit in order to join our friends without disturbing them too suddenly. He was an old college companion, and would detain me."

Marini and Ella moved on; they were more silent, more quiet now. Their voices, when they did speak, fell to a murmur. She drew closer to his side, with an air of that sweet trust which springs from an overflowing heart. Rossi watched them, and smiled till his white teeth fairly glittered through the raven blackness of his beard and moustache. Maria saw the smile, and gathered it to her heart as a homage.

They were approaching the iron gate which opens upon the Chiaja, opposite the Vattaria. Rossi and Ella paused close by the statue of the dying gladiator, the most noble original of which is in the Capitoline Museum. Their faces were turned from the dying agony, which seems to freeze the very marble to renewed coldness, and once more they fell into earnest conversation. Rossi and Maria came near the fountain, which was filling the air with the cool, bell-like tinkle of its rain.

"One moment," he said, leaving her suddenly, "have patience with me again. I must exchange a word with Marini before he leaves the ground."

He glided from her, noiselessly, as he had done before; and, directly, she saw his shadow blended with that of the dying gladiator. Whether he spoke with Ella or her companion she could not tell, but she was beginning to get impatient, and resolved to walk forward. Neither Ella nor her companion had perceived his approach; for they were talking with great eagerness.

With his eyes fixed upon the dying agony of the gladiator, and his person hid in the dim shadow cast downward from the marble, the traitor listened.

"I saw these exiles frequently, both in London and France," Ella was saying, "and they entrusted me with the letter, which I promised to place safely into your own hands: it will inform you of all their projects, it points out the way by which you can co-operate here. The letter is safe and to-morrow you shall have it."

"No! to-morrow I attend the king, there is a boar hunt in the royal forests, and I could not absent myself without suspicion."

"The next day be it then!"

These words were scarcely uttered when Rossi was at Maria's side again. He now addressed her eagerly, striving to subdue his voice to a tone of entreaty.

"Come," he said, "they will give us a little time yet, and the night is so lovely, let us take another turn."

The infatuation was on her: Maria was like a leaf in the wind to that subtle man. What arguments he used, what insidious flattery, need not be repeated; her own acts will best explain all.

How little time does it require to set the springs of evil in motion! The young people left the garden apparently cheerful and careless as they had entered it; but there had been pledges given that night, which must be redeemed in tears, perhaps blood.

Maria was in her cousin's chamber alone, and with a look upon her face that would have startled you. A tortoise shell locket, inlaid with gold, stood before her, and she held a tiny watch in one hand, while the other searched among the curious charms that ornamented the chair, for a key in the disguise of a small trumpet, which opened the casket; but her hands trembled till the charms rattled against each other, and the diamonds on the watch took fire from the quivering light. She could, with difficulty, fit the key in its lock. She lifted the fragile lid as if it had been of iron, and turning her pale face toward the door of an inner room, held her breath, listening as the burglar listens when he feels the bolt yielding to his grasp.

There was no sound—nothing but the soft sweet breathing of a sleeper in the next room.

Slowly the young girl let her eyes drop to the casket. A few trinkets were there, and a folded letter. She snatched the paper, thrust it with both hands into her bosom, then closing the casket, locked it with impetuous haste, and went into the inner room trembling in every limb as she walked.

Ella was sleeping sweetly on her snow white couch, the delicate curtains had been drawn back from the pillow over night, and her fair young face in all its smiling goodness and rich bloom, was revealed in the repose of her morning slumber. The golden hair lay in waves and masses under her temples and down upon her shoulders, for the pretty little cap, one mass of Valenciennes, was all too fragile for the abundant tresses that would break free.

How like a serpent Maria seemed, as she glided up to that beautiful sleeper, and stooping her pale frightened face down, kept her gleaming eyes riveted upon those tranquil features, while she stole the watch cautiously back to its place beneath the pillow.

Maria received a note during the day, and Ella was surprised by the paleness of her cousin's cheek as she read it.

"I had better not call on you to-day, lady, mine," so the little, perfumed billet, ran. "It is not likely that the happiness of seeing you alone would be vouchsafed to me twice in succession: and in the presence of our friends, the little commission you promised to execute could not be acted upon safely. This evening, my beautiful, when the moon is up, I will be under the window, where all unsuspected I have watched to feast my eyes with a glimpse of your heavenly face. A few notes on the guitar, love, shall warn you of my presence. Then the little document may be safely transmitted, but not without some token, a flower which has touched your lips, a leaf, anything that assures me I am still loved. Have all prepared, and do not fail me. Without a glance of that dear face at the window, how can I exist. Rossi."

"And will it be a favorable answer? I begin to think so, cousin, for your cheeks are in a flame now," said Ella, giving a roguish little peep over her cousin's shoulder, "Rossi, beautiful, beautiful; I was all in the wrong, fair marchioness. How delighted mamma will be, a real lady in the family, of course. You accept, come, come, let us write the answer. I should so like to practice a little. How very delightful it must be to accept a man at once and put him out of misery."

She was flashing about like a sunbeam, that darling little Ella White, clapping her rosy palms together, and enjoying her cousin's annoyance with a relish of the mischief that was perfectly exhilarating. You would not have believed her the same creature who had talked so earnestly in the Chiaja twelve hours before.

Maria had darted a sharp look over her shoulder, and folded her note with evident trepidation; at first a little reproach sprang to her lips, but the unconstrained gaiety of her cousin assured her that she had only sought a glimpse of the signature, and with a forced laugh, she deposited the note in the little embroidered pocket of her apron. "Oh, how cruel! not one little peep!" cried Ella, clasping her hands in mock entreaty. "How shall I ever know how a lover proposes?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A NEW WAY TO POP THE QUESTION.

BY JAMES H. DANA.

I WAS sitting, one day, dreamingly regarding the fire, when my friend, Harry Conway, came in, looking inexpressibly woe-begone.

"What's the matter, Hal?" I said, cheerily, "has Lizzy jilted you?"

"You've hit it," he replied, moodily. "To-day, when I asked her to be my partner on our sleigh-ride, she curtly told me that she was engaged with Ned Hammersley."

"Rather strange," I said. "Surely she don't mean to prefer that conceited fool to you?"

"I wish I had never seen her," said Harry. "I have been in torture for a month past, wishing to ask her to be mine, and yet withheld by the fear of a refusal. And now the suspense is over: but oh! how fatally. She despises my suit."

"Not so fast, Harry," I answered. "I am a married man, and claim to know something of the gentler sex: and there is nothing more certain than that a woman frequently means the very reverse of what she *does*."

"Then you don't believe," eagerly said my friend, "that Lizzy scorns me?"

"I do not. On the contrary, I fancy that she likes you—nay! more than half loves you."

"God bless you for those words," cried Harry, shaking my hand rapturously. "You make a new man of me." But almost immediately his countenance fell, and he added. "Yet what did she mean by engaging to go with Hammersley? She knew very well I intended to ask her."

"Perhaps," I said, quietly, "there's the pinch. Young ladies, now-a-days, don't like to have it thought that any time will do to ask them. When I was a bachelor, Harry, and wished a fair companion for a sleigh-ride, I took very good care that no one asked her before I did."

"A precious fool I've been," said Harry.

"That's a true word, if ever you spoke one," said I, laughing. "You know no more about courting, Harry, than a cat does of astronomy. The case is this, my dear fellow. Lizzy is piqued, and, though she had a good right to be so perhaps, you must not allow her, for all that, to get the advantage of you. If she flirts, you must counter-flirt: and so go into the parlor at once, and ask Miss Lawrence to be your partner: you'll find her and my wife at their crochet-work; and hark—a secret in your ear. My pretty cousin is engaged, though it is not known here:

so there'll be no harm done, flirt as hard as you will."

Now, Miss Lawrence was a beauty, an heiress, and a famous toast. Her home was in New York, but she had come to spend Christmas among our hills: and great had been the sensation which she had created; for, in truth, there was no one to compare with her, in the whole county, except Lizzy herself.

After much persuasion Harry consented to my plan. Fortunately my fair cousin had made no engagement for the ride. When Harry had gone I let Miss Lawrence into the secret.

"Now," said I, "you must assist me to make this match. Lizzy loves Harry, there is no doubt; but she has everything her own way here."

"As all belles should," saucily interrupted my cousin.

"Agreed," said I, "except when it is going to make her unhappy for life. Harry is very sensitive, and a little flirting, let me tell you, will frighten him off altogether. The thing is to make Lizzy jealous, and so repay her in her own coin. After that she'll easier come to terms."

"For once, I suppose, I must turn traitor to my sex," said Miss Lawrence, laughing.

The evening for the sleigh-ride came, and was a night among a thousand. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the winter moon shone clear and beautiful: the air was cold as zero, but still; the landscape looked like dream-land. It was a sight to make an old man young again, to see the sleighs dashing to and fro through the village streets, collecting their lovely freight: while the merry jingle of the bells made the blood dance joyously in the veins.

Away swept the gay cavalcade. Most of the belles and beaux were distributed through three enormous sleighs, and, to judge from the incessant mirth kept up, were crazy with fun. There were about half a dozen sleighs, however: and among these were Harry's and Hammersley's.

Lizzy looked astonished, as I suspected she would, when she saw who Harry's companion was. She knew that Miss Lawrence was quite equal to herself in beauty, and superior in fortune: and a shade of alarm stole over her face. But she disguised it cleverly, under an additional gaiety of manner; was wittier than ever; and

danced, laughed, and talked as if she was the happiest of the happy.

My fair cousin played her part, meantime, to admiration. Everybody thought that Harry had made a conquest: and not a few complimented him, even in Lizzy's hearing, on his good fortune. But he himself was less elated.

"We're carrying it too far," he said to me, anxiously. "Lizzy don't mind me a bit. She's really half in love with Hammersley. See how she leans on his arm and looks up into his face."

"So did Miss Lawrence, five minutes ago, to you; and yet she's in love with another. Ah! Harry, women are born-cheats, I'll wager now that Lizzy is as uneasy as yourself."

"I wish I could think so," sighed Harry.

"Keep up your flirtation," I said, "and don't be the first to give in——"

I would have said more, but, at that moment, a cry of fire rang startlingly through the ball-room; and looking up, I saw, from the huge volumes of smoke pouring into the doorway, that the hall was in flames. Simultaneously a voice cried that the staircase was on fire, and retreat in that direction cut off. It seems that, while we had been dancing, a candle had fallen, and the fire got headway undetected.

"We must escape by the windows, Harry," I cried. "Fortunately the roof of the porch is just beneath them, and the descent thence not far, while the snow will break the jump. I will look after my wife; you take Miss Lawrence."

But Harry had already disappeared. As, at that instant, I caught sight of my wife, I thought no more of him; but pushed through the affrighted crowd, in order to join her. In another moment she was safe on the ground, and

with her Miss Lawrence, whom I had found clinging to her. Having rescued them, I hastened back to render what assistance I could to others.

I had scarcely, however, regained the ball-room, when I saw a wild form dashing by; but I had hardly recognized it as that of Lizzy, when it fell into the arms of a gentleman advancing quite as wildly from the opposite direction.

"Oh! save me, save me," she cried; bewildered with terror; and with that sunk senseless.

Could I believe my eyes? Yes! it was Harry, not Hammersley, into whose arms she had fallen. Nor had it been a mistake. That glance of reliance and love, which she gave my friend, ere she fainted, was eloquent of the contrary.

"You didn't seem to think of Miss Lawrence," said I, slyly, to Harry, when all having safely escaped, we went together to seek our sleighs. "Nor, in fact, did Lizzy appear to think of Hammersley. A pretty pair you are to flirt!"

Harry made no reply, but looked excessively flat, yet happy beyond description.

A month subsequently Lizzie married my friend, Miss Lawrence being bridesmaid.

"Do you and Harry intend to flirt any more?" said I, in a whisper, to the bride. "You're such adepts, you should keep it up. You especially finish so superbly."

Lizzy blushed scarlet, but rallying, saucily replied:

"I find it was you that put Harry up to flirting; you wished to set us quarrelling, you rogue: but I check-mated you, sir, by my new way of popping the question."

Harry laughed, my wife laughed, and Miss Lawrence laughed, and all at myself. So Lizzy had the best of it after all, as women will.

CAROLINE BRADSHAW.

A STORY OF NEW ENGLAND LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

New London, June 28th, 18—.

"PASS me that basket, John," said sister Augusta to a servant. "No! how stupid you are! the one that has the silver in it; I want to put in these spoons. That's it. Now take at least half of this matting into the front parlor. Don't drag it; don't upset that vase!—be careful! there is Sir Walter Scott directly in your path—to the right a little! to the right, John! There, he is fairly out of the room," turning to me; "and I can breathe once more. I declare, every time we fix things to leave them for the summer, I wish we hadn't one half as much stuff in the house. Cad, that curtain, dear. Thank you. I can't trust John with this; and Mary isn't much better. I tell you, there isn't a day, Cad, when I don't think that I would like it best being just rich enough so as to have a good, little, comfortable establishment, where you and I could do all and have no servants in the house. See that oil-spot! Wouldn't this be nice, to have nobody about but ourselves? Husband and Freddy, you and I?"

"Let's sell half that we have and give it to the poor, and try it. I have been thinking——"

"Yes, I know you have been thinking how it would set a dozen poor families on their feet at once; and, besides—for heaven's sake, John, don't open the door like that? There won't be an inch of paint left on anything in the house."

"I'll be careful, ma'am. Mary would like the screw-driver."

"Here; and take these curtains into the dining-room. They go into the long box. Let them be on the lid, though; I'll see to packing them. I'm provoked, Cad, about your going up country. It will be so pleasant out to the villa this season, with the Newells and Blairdells for our neighbors! Augustus Cummings too, he is a friend of the Newells, and will be out often. You haven't seen him?"

"No. Here are the forks, Augusta."

"You ought to. I want you out to Roxbury more for this than anything else. With *his* face, fortune, and talent too—for they all say he is a splendid speaker—he won't be in the market long, you——"

"Ah, fie! Augusta."

"By no means, Cad! Of course you will be
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married some time; and it may as well be to Augustus Cummings as to any one. There, see! the forks go well here. He has only to see your face; and that is what Otway and Miss Rogers say, as well as I. Do go to Roxbury with us."

"No."

"Oh, dear! why?"

"In part because I don't want to meet Augustus Cummings after all that has been said and planned by you and Otway, and Miss Rogers. I couldn't look him in the face. Let Miss Rogers go and show him *her* face, while I am up in the country drinking new milk."

Some despairing thing Augusta would have said in reply; but Mary came in trembling, to tell her that she had broken one of the parlor lamps into a thousand pieces. She "ran against Lydia, or Lydia against her, rather—the stupid thing!—and knocked it out of her hands."

We had a weary day; we had many weary days as the covering of furniture, the packing and removing went on; but I comforted myself with thinking every night after I went into my room—I shall not see Augustus Cummings; and this pleases me. I shall go to New Hampshire, where I have not been now for four summers, and eat berries, and drink new milk, and wear loose dresses and cool shoes, write letters, and keep a journal of the great things that must happen there. I shall sit at the large, round table with my grand-parents, where the baked beans and warm brown loaf are always so good; shall be with my good and noble Uncle Harrison and Aunt Agnes in the large, shady house that was Augusta's and my home while our parents lived; and shall delight myself with the jungle-like luxuriance of field, garden and yard; with the thick shade of the old elm, and with the green turf that is as soft as velvet, and as cool as a bath to the feet at night. And this is all; only I shall often see my cousins Henry and Laura, whom as yet I hardly know; and hear the birds, and take long rambles alone. And this is all that will take place there. In other respects I shall come back from those still places, to this busy city where the pulse of life beats so high and so quick, just as I went.

But I see now that I shall not; for what images shall I carry back of the mornings here, when

all the lands about lie still, and blue, and pure, as if in the night-time, while his tired children slept, "God's dewy hand" had touched all things anew; as if He had breathed anew into our mother earth the breath of life, so that she became a breathing spirit with many voices, all saying unto us—"come—come now and let the sordid cares go; be free, be glad with us." The little hills clap their hands; the mountains and the trees shadow forth God's greatness; all the little islands and the birds are glad. Come, child of earth, child of heaven, come and be happy with them. Consider all that thou seest. See that we love thee and take thee to our large, warm heart, as the mother of flesh the babe whom strangers have worried. Thy God made us, fresh and genial as thou seest us, and gave us to thee. Be thankful to him while thy life shall last. Think the great thoughts, do the loving, noble deeds, that shall make thee true to the great Being who dwelleth in us and in thee.

I am half-weeping as this entreaty comes to me, albeit full of thanksgiving; for, as there is heavenly wisdom and sweetness in the voices I seem to hear, so is there sadness, as if the spirits that look abroad see sin and sorrow on the earth; see that multitudes of men, women, and children are beginning the new day without once lifting their eyes or their hearts away from the ground they tread. I shall never forget these mornings, as God knows. They will go with me, by-and-bye, to the city home where brick and mortar are around me, and where lordly wealth and crouching beggary go along the streets side by side. Oh, dear!—not the sigh, not the "oh, dear" of an ennui, but of a heart sick as death of the poverty, wretchedness, and sin in that great city where I have my home. It is as if no bright morning sun beamed anywhere on this earth; as if there were no green fields and woods stretching afar with room enough in them and to spare; as if no cool, pure breeze went abroad through the day; as if the pure air, the green fields, and the early day were not saying, "come, all ye that are happy!—come—come, ye poor, benighted, afflicted ones! learn of us; 'drink from the welling fountains of that living knowledge, which purifies the heart, chastens the affections, and raises you to communion with the great Source of life.'" Oh, I pray now with a yearning heart that will not let God go unless He hear me, that the wandering and the poor may be restored and comforted, and that the rich may be taught of the Saviour, so that they may understand the true use of life and wealth.

The 29th.

Half the village called here yesterday to see me. The young talked of their pleasure in having me here again for a summer season; of the sails

we will not fail to have on the Sunapee; of the fish we will take; of the horseback rides and the scramble up Kearsage, and of the dinner on the top, where we will be as hungry as cubs, so that the dinner there shall be remembered our whole life-time.

The elderly ladies came so early, because they had been told on every hand that I am more than ever like my mother. They wanted to see me, they said; and, when they saw me, the reminiscences came.

"The land!" said Mrs. Boynton, shaking her little curls in a vigorous way, "this house was like a palace in those days, and your mother was like a queen. Everybody looked up to her. And when old Governor Dinsmoor came into town—which was longer ago than you can remember, Miss Caroline—he must come right here, be lodged and fed here, because there was no other house in town, public or private, good enough for him. I remember as if it were yesterday, a great company went out to escort him into the village, my husband among the rest. He and others of his make were good enough for this part of the business; and I suppose most of them thought this part good enough for them. Mr. Boynton didn't, though; I didn't. We were always inclined to look higher; and now, as your uncle and aunt can tell you, Miss Caroline, we do look higher; as high, I suppose, as anybody in town. We didn't stay in Lowell three years for nothing, as you will believe, when you see our altered style. But at the time I am speaking of we could just stand back at the outside; and, once in a while, get a glimpse at the show. There were other out-of-town folks here at your house beside the governor and his suite. And I remember seeing the Woodmans, and Cummings, and Spragues going in and out. These families and yours were very intimate at this time. I was going down by here, I remember, just at sundown, and they were all out in the yard together. The governor—a fine, portly-looking man—was standing talking with your mother and Dr. Cummings, close before one of the white rose-bushes; and he broke off a half-blown rose and some buds and leaves, and laid them among the braids of your mother's black, glossy hair. It made her look beautiful, I assure you; for she was dressed just right for it. She had on a black satin dress that would stand alone it was so rich—I dare say you or Augusta have the satin now; and her complexion was like yours; as white and fair as the white rose itself. Your mother was very merry that night—it was only two years before she died, three years before your father died. I can remember her laugh now as plain as if it was only yesterday that I heard it. There was a band of music here in the yard that

evening; and, along late, they went out to the roof of your house and played there. They heard the music distinctly over to your grandfather Bradshaw's. Your father was a grand-looking man. He was a business man. It seemed as though half the village was gone when he died. But I declare! I must go. You must run in often, Caroline. The girls have got a piano, and paintings they did at New Hampton, where they almost graduated, and I don't know what all to show you. And, look here," lowering her voice as she came nearer; "Andrew—you must remember him; for you were always together when you were children; he is in Lowell now, in trade, as I suppose your uncle's folks have told you. Well, the girls are full of plans to get him up here, by-and-bye, after you have been over to your grandfather's to stay awhile. They want him up here. They think *something* will come of it; but I shan't tell you what, Miss Caroline!" laughing and shaking her curls. "I shan't tell you what; and I see by that blush of yours that I needn't. Good evening, Miss Caroline!—good evening!"

Monday, July 1st.

My Cousin Henry graduated last year at Dartmouth. He reads law now with Uncle Harrison; comes over every day from grandfather's for this purpose. He is a fine scholar; a grave, still, handsome man; with an air a good deal reserved, a little haughty, so that I do not like him. He does not like me, I fancy, as he had little to say to me, even while I was at grandfather's, where we sat at the same table, and passed each other often. Laura is a dear girl of twenty, as fresh, modest, and charming as a spring flower. She and Henry have their home at grandfather's since their mother died, three years ago. Their father has his mostly at Washington, when he is not away on his Indian agency, which often takes him to the West, where he is at present.

The Boynton girls call often, and praise Andrew, and drag me over to their house, whether I am willing or not; and come purposely after tea to take long walks with me. They say often to others—"oh! Caroline and we are *very* intimate. There isn't a day that we are not together somewhere. That is, when she is here at her uncle's. We are going to send for Andrew when she's done running over to her grandfather's so often, naughty girl that she is! He'll be delighted with the rambles we have, and all that."

It is for those Boynton girls to demonstrate how meagre is wealth when the heart is poor, and how worthless all the lessons of the schools, when they just roll over the tongue a few times and then are gone. It seems to me that every day, every hour of their lives, is without one single, lofty, beneficial endeavor. It troubles me

that I must be so much with them; for I feel it dragging me down. It need not, I suppose. I suppose I ought to have so much of the divine, Christ-like life in my breast, that I might interpose words of gentleness and wisdom, now and then, and to win them on to better thoughts and ways.

I shall go over to grandfather's to-morrow, where I need neither see them nor hear Andrew Boynton's praises sung for a whole week. And my little Cousin Jemmy, the full-moon faced boy who sits now at my feet, watching to see me throw pen, and pen-wiper away, he shall go with me. I can get along better with my stiff Cousin Henry if Jemmy goes like a wild thing from one to the other, and through the rooms.

The 6th.

I have told Cousin Laura that I do not like Henry; that I do not find it easy getting along with him; and that I fear I never shall. She was sorry. But she looked up out of her momentary regret with a smile; and said—"you *will* like him, Caroline, when you know him better. Every body likes him. I don't know another person in the world who has so many friends." Heigh-ho! I wonder if anybody else is troubled as I am with people they cannot, make what effort they will, thoroughly like; and to whom they cannot by any earthly or heavenly means be thoroughly indifferent.

He—Henry I mean—helps grandfather and the troop of work people make hay now a part of every day. It is his part to manage the oxen and hay-cart, because he is not so strong as the rest. And while they stand on the lawn, and he drinks his milk, or his cold water within, and chats a little with grandmother and Laura, I like to slip out through the front door, and breaking hastily some roses and asparagus in the yard, hang them on the yokes of the creatures and about the cart. I am back into the house before he has time to get out. I will not stay to see how he likes it; I will not trouble myself enough about what he likes for this. And yet, in sober truth, I do trouble myself. I gather currants for the table, thinking—"this will make Henry's breakfast taste good; he eats so little!" And when I put flowers in the vases, I think, as I group them—"this will please Henry. He won't say anything praising them or me; but I shall see his eyes kindle as they linger on them." This provokes me that I must be continually thinking of him, when in reality I do not like him. It makes me, as it were, his slave, and spoils all the grace and comfort of my action. I would gladly be his cousin, as James says, "in a thoroughly divine way," serving him in any spontaneous manner as the free air and the birds do. As the child Jemmy does. He runs over the haystacks

chasing grasshoppers; rides in the empty cart, and on the high loads; goes wild with pleasure, and carries laughter wherever he goes.

The 10th.

Laura and I rode over to the village last evening to bring Henry from the office.

"And so you don't like me very well, Caroline," said Henry, as soon as we were seated in the carriage. He gathered the reins with a look half gay, half serious.

"Not very well—nor you me, I fancy," I answered, in the same vein.

"No—not very well; but I would like to like you. See that bird! Hear him! I don't know any sound on earth so sweet." He meant the bobalink, that with his joy-craved "ting a ling-ling-ling," sailed slowly, albeit with fast-flitting wings over the strawberry field.

Somehow I liked him better for the few sincere, impulsive words he had spoken. I still like him better; I think he likes me better. He looked quietly in my eyes many times while we were at breakfast. He lingered near me awhile after it was over. We disputed about the Administration; and I followed him to the door for the sake of hearing the last word. I got it by darting back into the house directly I had said, "no! and your saying that only proves that you don't know so much about politics as I do."

I heard him laugh; but, as I was out of his sight, he did not reply. I was right glad to have the last word. Grandmother and Laura were glad. Grandfather took his hat to go, as he said to Jemmy, who was laughing with the rest, "the way with the women folks, ain't it, my boy Jemmy? They always manage in some way to get the last word."

"Us, grandpa," replied Jemmy. And he slid up to grandfather with a look of half doubt, half defiance at us "women folks."

But grandmother had only to show him her good smile, Laura to pelt him a little with pickled grapes, and I to take him dancing around the table, and we were on velvet again.

We called at Uncle Harrison's last evening, and soon the Boyntons came flocking in until they were all there. I was near being carried off my feet by them. When *would* I come back to the village to stay a while, a week, say? they asked. They had just got a letter from Lowell; could I not guess who wrote it? Ah, but indeed! I could never *begin* to guess what nice things were in it about one Caroline Bradshaw. I could *never* guess that. Mrs. Boynton shook her curls and Mr. Boynton his sides as this went on. "Never mind, Caroline! don't blush so!" said he, tucking me familiarly under my chin. "The girls would be glad enough if they could have as nice things said about them by—by Henry, here, for

instance." Angeline sneered a little and tossed her head. Adaline laughed, blushed, hid her face, after having covered her father's mouth a moment with her hand, and said—"oh, pa! you naughty man you! I declare, I'll be mad if you say another word."

"Yes, you *say* so. But we all know that you like well enough all that is said to you about the beaux; especially about one of the beaux just now not far off." This gave occasion to fresh blushes, laughter, and expostulation. When it was over he turned to me, saying—"bb neighborly, Caroline! be neighborly! come in any time and take a ride with the girls in the new carriage. You haven't seen it yet. Andrew sent it last week, from Lowell. Ha, ha! You must try it, and see how you like it." He then turned to Uncle Harrison and resumed his conversation with him on the speediest ways of money getting. Of all the methods he had tried, the man unblushingly declared, the best was putting the little he had out of his hands and going into bankruptcy as he did before he went to Lowell. I was glad to see that uncle only nodded his head at this proposition, looking very grave.

"To be sure, it was a bad job failing in that way," continued Mr. Boynton, a little embarrassed by uncle's manner, "but there was no other way. I had held on as long as I could. I couldn't have paid more than ten cents on a dollar, if I had given up every cent I had in the world, every *single* cent."

"Even this would have been something for Dr. Cummings. He was your security to a considerable amount, I believe."

"Yes; two thousand dollars," replied he, looking ashamed, or vexed, or in some other way discomfited. "But I couldn't pay it! I've told the doctor and others who meddled with what didn't concern them, that I couldn't. He is no poorer for my going into bankruptcy, and I am a great deal richer. But there is no help for it. It is the way the world goes. First one at the top of the ladder, and then another. The doctor had his day: he must let me have mine now, whether he is willing or not."

"I am sure I hate Dr. Cummings," interposed Angeline, who, having seen me listening to them instead of herself, had turned her ear to the conclusion. "Going over our heads as he does, and he as poor as Job's turkey! We, none of us have the least patience! As for Andrew, he won't take any notice of him, any way!"

"No! that he won't!" exclaimed Adaline. "He's above it! Did you ever see, Mrs. Bradshaw, what a figure his little girls go since their mother died? It's positively ridiculous! so often with dirty frocks and faces!"

"Poor young things!" said Aunt Agnes, with

a sorrowful face. "I pity them! it was so different while their mother lived, although in the last years of her life they were poor and she a sick woman. I wish Mrs. Means would manage to keep them in a little better order for the doctor's sake. I know he is often troubled about it. But I suppose the poor woman does the best she can. She isn't very strong; and it is a great care and labor for her."

"I suppose so," replied Angeline, without appearing to have really heard what aunt said. "I should think the doctor's rich uncle in Boston would be ashamed! Rich as an old Jew, and not doing a single thing for the doctor, or any other relative, they say, but the nephew, Augustus Cummings, the young minister, you know. The old man has educated him, and done everything for him; and will end, I suppose, by giving him all he's got."

"And if he does, the young minister will keep it, I'll warrant you," said Mr. Boynton, tipping his head knowingly. "He'll hold the money-bags tight enough, and keep preaching every Sunday to his people, that they must sell all they've got and buy souls with it."

"Now that's wicked, father!" said Mrs. Boynton, with affected chiding. "Caroline won't like to hear you say such things; and I'm sure I don't. But about the old man's giving his money to Augustus Cummings, you see if he gives it to him. You see if he don't get mad about something just before he dies, and make a will, and give all he's got to the missionaries. 'Tis the way such cross, rich old fellows are apt to do."

"Well, if he does do it, nobody has any business to blame us for the doctor's being poor, or anybody but the old uncle himself!" said Angeline. "It belongs to him, and not to pa, not to pa! to set Dr. Cummings up."

"I guess it does!" rang Adaline's voice. "I guess it does! Yes, indeed! I guess it does!" rang and groaned the others.

We made no reply; but they might have read any quantity of disapprobation in our looks, if they had given themselves a moment to that kind of study. I saw that Henry was ready to snap his fine teeth at them all. Laura, who had not once spoken, had tears in her eyes, and glowing cheeks. The doctor's little girls are Cousin Laura's darlings. She takes them lovingly to her side at church, and wherever she meets them. And on the part of the girls it is—"Laura, I've got a flower hid in my hand for you. Guess what it is." Laura purposely guesses wrong to give the children amusement. "A dandelion."

"No; guess again—guess again."

"A thistle flower."

"Ha! no; you must guess once more."

Then Laura guessed—"a pink;" and a pink it generally is.

Clara, who is ten years old, and who has beautiful tastes, which, by the way, are often disturbed by the kind of toilet Mrs. Means makes up for her, touches Laura on her hand or arm, and asks her in whispers if her hair ribbons are right; if she liked that great, thick cape on such a young girl as she is, and on such a warm day. She begs her to tie her bonnet-strings a little tighter, so that her head need not turn in it, as it is apt to do after Mrs. Means ties it. I have seen the doctor watching how things went between them. Once I am sure I saw tears in his eyes; and often I have seen a look as if he would willingly go on his knees before Laura and his girls, and take them together to his heart.

He is a tall man of easy manners, with a fresh and a pleasant face. Or, this is his habitual expression. One often sees him looking pale and discouraged, and very sad. Laura has her eye on him when he is in this mood, and sighs if he sighs; but directly says cordial and pleasant things to him, until he smiles and comes to her side, when she is so gentle, so happy, so womanly! She would marry him if he were to offer himself, poor as he is, heavy as her toils and cares would be; nay, *because* he is poor, and has need of her in his house. But the poor, dear child must not do this, unless she will allow me—good! if she will take him in his poverty, they shall find that a kind fairy comes in among the wedding guests, and leaves a generous dowry under the bride's pillow.

I hear Henry singing. I shall go down and ask him if he was not wishing to see me; if he is not glad that I have come.

Wednesday, the 11th.

Yes; he was glad! downright glad! he said. He was tired of those everlasting law-books. I, too, looked tired. Would I not then go and take a long, quick walk with him over the hills? I was glad to go; Laura was glad to see us go; but she would not accompany us. She would rather stay and shade her tower; for, as she has leisure in these days, I teach her landscape-painting. She went with us across the lawn, repeated grandmother's charges about our being back in season for supper, kissed us, and then ran back singing to her work.

"It makes the poor child very happy having you here with her," said Henry, as we went on our way. "And to see that you are beginning to like me better; you do like me better, don't you, Caroline?"

"Yes, a great deal!" replied I, meeting quietly his honest, good-natured look. "And you, Cousin Henry?"

"I like you vastly now; but at first——"

"How was it at first? Let me hear about it."
"At first I thought you cold and arbitrary. I am never pleased with a woman of this character. But we must walk faster, cousin mine! See!" showing me his watch. "A quarter to six. We will walk two miles out. Can you, and be back at six, so that grandmother's tea need not wait for us?"

"Yes; try me."

But Henry himself grew pale, and his breath almost went out of him with the rapid walking. He was grave and thoughtful to find how little strength he has; but it did not last. He soon forgot it in his enjoyment of the loitering pace, the shade of the old woods that lay along our way, and the singing of the great multitude of birds.

Our walk ended with my starting to run away from him on reaching the lawn, that I might be the first in the house. But whew! He went by me with graceful leaps, and was spreading his arms in the door to keep me out, before I was half way across the lawn. The feat pleased grandfather, who greatly enjoys all Henry's victories over us "women-folks."

How good it was coming to the supper-table after the invigorating walk. The little hot biscuit with cream in them, the strawberries and sugar, the new, sweet butter, and the cold custards—how good they were, all of them!—but none of them so good to me as it was to see that Henry ate them with exquisite relish, laughing heartily the meantime at grandfather's lively stories.

Friday, 13th.

Letters came from Augusta and her husband.

"No Augustus Cummings yet," Augusta writes. "And the reason is the Newells have failed, and the house here has gone with the rest. The affairs of this world go crazily, don't they, Cad? I often wonder if there isn't some hidden method of making them go better. It appears to me there ought to be. If there isn't, if there *must* always be as much trouble and fuss of one sort and another as there is now, I don't know why the world should have been made, or the people that are in it. I confess I think better daily of your life up there. Eating strawberries and white sugar and cream, picking peas and shell-ing them, eating cucumbers from the vines direct, and helping grandmother and the rest churn—I confess this seems comfortable. But then I suppose these things are not *life* after all; or they else only make up the *material* part of life, unless they do something for the inner woman. Ah, heaven bless us all, and make something nobler of us! or, all but you and Otway. You and he are quite as good as I can well bear to have you until I grow better some way. But this I shall

say—heaven help me and Abby Rogers to be a little less vain, and simple, and good-for-nothing, for I am so dissatisfied with myself!

"Love for thee, darling, and for all the rest in that house and in Uncle Harrison's,

From theirs and thine,

AUGUSTA."

Dear Augusta! and yet it is good for her that she hungers and thirsts after a better life, after righteousness. It has been said by one who has thought much on life—"if nature perfectly satisfied me, if society perfectly justified me; if my relations to the one brought me no consciousness of disease, and my relations to the other no consciousness of sin; then I should be forever content to feed upon honey, and bask in the smile of my fellows, ignoring God, ignoring destiny." One may willingly suffer dissatisfaction and pain in one's poverty and sin, if thereby the sin and poverty will go, and God's blessedness come into their place.

I can hear Henry's hoe moving in the garden. Early as it is in the day this is a sign that his brain is already tired. He is not well; I see this even plainer and plainer. He could not walk with Laura and me, last evening, because he felt so languid, and because the dews chill him. He came out, however, a little way to meet us on our return; and had delicate hard-hack-flowers in his hands, gathered by the way. These he placed in our braids, the purple in Laura's, the white in mine. He smiled and inquired about our walk; but I saw that he had tears in his eyes. Poor Henry!—poor Henry I keep saying in my heart. I sometimes fear that he will droop and die by the way, just when his feet have reached the temple, and his hand is stretched out for entrance. God forbid! this I feel I could not well bear. He has "only been studying too hard," he and Dr. Cummings both say when they are questioned. "A little relaxation and good company will set all right." I trust they do not deceive themselves and us.

Tuesday, 17th.

He is better-day, so that we sing again in whatever part of the house we are.

For the rest, the Boyntons and others walk or ride over to see us—especially the Boyntons. And especially the Boyntons are dying, as they constantly affirm, because I do not go back to the village. They have forty plans, all of them perfectly delightful, they say; and, among the rest, one for a great party at their house. They only wait for me to be back there; for not until I return to the village will "somebody-else" come up. "Er! they can't wait!" they say, shaking themselves from head to foot.

The doctor will ride over this afternoon, bringing in his children with him. Laura goes singing

and in smiles as she helps grandmother and Nancy make the old-fashioned cup-cakes, of which the doctor is so fond, and tarts and cookies for the children. The best in the house grandmother and Cousin Laura will bring forward for the good man and his motherless ones, who now in their comparative poverty and their inefficient house-keeping have so few "creature comforts." Once it was very different there, grandmother says. Once they had as good a table as any family in town; and people went and came, always sure of a welcome. The elder Boynton gave them the first blow; the younger Boynton the second; and ever since that time things have seemed to go wrong. The doctor drove here and there to retrieve his losses, if possible, until in his overaction and anxiety his health gave way; and for a year he had no income whatever. The doctor's wife had been in bad health for years; still, in the way of reducing their expenditures, they gave up their maid, greatly as they needed her with their young family. In this way Mrs. Cummings overtasked her strength. Her health utterly failed; and after a year of helpless suffering she lay down to the rest of the grave.

And this was the work of the Boyntons. Heavens, how I despise them! a thousand times more than I do the vilest worm that crawls. For the poor, half-naked man who takes that which does not of law belong to him, lest he and his starve, I have compassion, charity; but none for the Boyntons, or for any others like them. But no one who believes in a God everywhere, in the heart of every man, approving or condemning his life, can envy them. Dr. Cummings does not envy them, nor has he reason; for, compared with them, he is a happy man in the noblest sense. He has a far-seeing, loving heart, that would not wrong another or ten worlds like this; and what is far more difficult than this, that can suffer wrong and still keep its patience, its good-will, its trust in God and the right. He is universally respected. Even the Boyntons, with their arrogance of wealth, look up to him from a great way below, although all with sneers and head-tossings.

Evening.

Just over the hill, in a little, brown house close to the road-side, there lives a poor widow, who ekes out the substance yielded by her thrifty garden, by going into several families in the village washing. As we were all sitting together this afternoon, we heard slow, shuffling steps, which we knew to be hers, approaching the parlor.

"Miss Bradshaw," said she. We looked around and saw her standing in the door, with her eyes fixed appealingly on grandmother. "I shouldn't a come this arternoon, Miss Bradshaw.

bein' as ye had company here; but I've got started for the village on business; an' I want ye ter come out here a minute; an' you too, 'squire, if ye will.

They both started with her for the dining-room; and I heard her say farther on her way—"I wanted ye ter look over this bill, if ye will. Fer them 'ere Boyntons 're goin' fer ter try ter cheat me out o' four shillin-an'-sixpence fer washin' fer 'em. I thought it was too bad!"

Henry frowned on hearing this; but immediately went on with me showing the pictures of the "Penny Magazine" to Charles and Clara. Meanwhile, at the farther side of the large room, before a window that opened upon the garden, stood Dr. Cummings and Laura side by side. They were talking earnestly; and for some time seemed not to notice the lively little Jane, who kept dancing about them, every now and then flinging her arms around them both, hugging them closely together.

"Laura! Laura! you don't know who's got you and papa," said the girl, holding them in the tight embrace. They both looked down on her and smiled. They both put out a hand to lay it on her head; it happened, therefore, that when Laura's hand lay on the golden locks of the child, the doctor's lay on Laura's. "I'm going to keep you and papa just so always, Laura!" pursued Jane, with her beautiful face upturned to theirs, and still embracing them.

Again were the doctor and Laura moved by the same impulse at the same moment. They both stooped to kiss the upturned face, and so it happened that they were not far from kissing each other. At this moment Clara called Jane to us; and I heard the doctor say—"would that the poor child might do as she threatens; that she might keep you and her papa always together." Laura did not speak. Nor did I dare to look up; but I fancied that I heard her heart beating. "But I am too old and too poor to be thinking of such happiness," sighed he, after a moment's pause.

"Too old and too poor!" repeated Laura, with a hesitating, agitated voice.

"Yes; I mean I am too old and too poor to hope that one so young and happy as yourself, will come and be a mother to my children, and a companion to me. But I do sometimes dream of such things; and, while it lasts, I am happy."

Little Laura's heart was plainly in a sad flutter. Her bosom heaved, her cheeks were in a glow, and her eyes were bent low, veiled by the long lashes. The doctor looked down on her face. He too, I saw, was intensely agitated. "You will not despise me for my dream, Laura?" pursued he inquiringly, and as if he must know how to interpret Laura's emotion.

"No," replied she, in soft, thrilling tones.

I heard no more that was said; for the grand-parents came in, and soon supper was on the table. But I saw that the doctor was thoughtful, although he compelled himself to talk; and that Laura was excited, and that she committed blunders in waiting upon the guests.

The 18th.

"It will be as my father and our grand-parents, and Henry and you say about it," Laura said, last evening, when I spoke to her of the doctor's proposals. She blushed and laughed a little, but with tears in her eyes; and would go no farther than this—"it will be as you all say. This is what I have said to the doctor."

"And will he write to your father?"

"Yes; to-morrow."

"And speak with our grand-parents and Henry?"

"Yes; to-morrow. And to-morrow we will talk it all over, dear Caroline. But to-night, my head is so confused!"

Evening.

The doctor called to-day on his way to a patient in the west part of the town. Laura looked down on her sewing, breathing heavily and irregularly. The doctor stood near her—he was in haste and could not sit—looking down on her gentle face, her busy fingers, as he talked with the rest about the weather. He seemed to have few clear ideas on the subject, however; and, at length, suddenly abandoning it, he said—"come, girls, get your bonnets, both of you, and ride a mile or so with me; the walk back will do you good."

We ran for our bonnets; and were already in the chaise putting them on, when the doctor came to the door, attended by our grand-parents. They always get as much of his friendly talk as possible, by going with him to the door, chatting while he is taking his place in the carriage, not unfrequently calling out the "good morning," or the "good evening," when he is across the lawn and in the road.

Now the doctor is a tall, broad man; his chaise is a tall but a very narrow chaise, so that when his portly figure showed itself in the doorway, Laura and I looked down on the mere bit of the seat we left unfilled, and then, with quick, inquiring glances, in each other's face. Grand-mother, at the same time, stepped out as she talked, to put my skirts further back into the carriage, lest, by-and-bye, they should be sweeping the wheel.

"Doctor!" exclaimed she, alarmed at seeing how her grand-daughters filled the carriage. "what will you do? See! the girls fill the seat! Can't you make a little more room for the doctor, girls? Try and see if you can't?"

We tried our best. We gathered our clothes close, we tipped ourselves off each way, laughing with the rest, when we saw that with all we could do there was not room enough for one-half of Dr. Cummings. He, by-the-bye, did not look in the least concerned. He laughed as heartily as any one, putting on his gloves in the meantime.

"The women-folks must wear so many petticoats now-a-days, there is no such thing as finding room anywhere for them," said grandfather, still laughing. "We must go edgewise, making ourselves as thin as a pan-cake. I'll leave it to you, doctor."

"It is just as you say, Esquire Bradshaw," replied the doctor, making his way into the chaise. "And so *this* one of the women-folks"—gathering Laura into his arms, and taking her seat—"this little thing mustn't complain if I—there; here we are; room enough; plenty room enough. Good morning, Mrs. Bradshaw! Good morning, Esquire."

Will it be believed? The doctor had "the little thing" fairly established on one knee—with her back toward me, so that I could not see what sort of a face she put upon the matter. She coughed, however, as did the doctor. She did not talk much; but the doctor kept up a vigorous chat with me. At length he put the reins into Laura's hands; and then, still talking with me, he encircled her form with his arm, drawing her closer to him, that she might find herself supported by his broad chest.

"There, that is it; that is comfortable," said he, looking into her face with infinite tenderness.

When the time came that we must turn back, he sighed that he must part with us; put out both hands to take Laura out; one, only, to help me. He clearly thinks me of very little consequence in comparison with Cousin Laura.

"Laura!" exclaimed I, finding that she made her way homeward, without being inclined to talk with me.

"What, Caroline?"

"I am going to tell Henry that the doctor was near eating you up."

No answer came. She still trudged on, with eyes on the ground.

"I am going to tell him that he all but kissed you."

Now she laughed. But she looked honestly as a child in my face and said—"I shan't care if you do. I like the doctor as well—a great deal *better* than I do my own father. I am less afraid of him. If he were to quite kiss me, I should know that it was all right, because *he* did it. I wouldn't care if you, and Henry, and all the world, or, at least, all the good and friendly part of it, were looking on to see."

Thus was I brought to let my weapons fall, because she could in no way be made to close with me. She was the dullest companion one ever had; unless one has had the bad luck, sometime, to be walking two miles with a lady as much in love as Cousin Laura. I was glad to get home. Especially glad I was, when we reached the lawn, to see Henry coming away along on the straight road. He was just returning from the office.

"Ah! there is dear, good Henry coming!" exclaimed I, joyfully. "I shall go and meet him; will you go?"

"No; we have already walked so far! I will go in and see how it is in the house," replied she, not half so glad to see Henry as I was. I can see that Dr. Cummings fills her heart more and more. I don't know what Henry and I will do for room there, if things go on long in this way.

"This is a good one!" said he, with a kindling face, as, with his hand out, he stepped forward the length of the reins to meet me. "I was thinking about you," he added. He took his place beside me, letting the reins lie on the horse's back, that he might go step-and-step.

"What were you thinking about me? That I am an idle thing, running out to meet you whenever you come, glad as if you had been gone three months, instead of three hours?"

"Not this. I was thinking that you are a dear, good girl; and that I am glad you came up here this summer. I am thankful to know you better," he continued with filling eyes—"that I love you, and you me. If I live it will help me through many a struggle, and if I die it will be a dear thing, a *dear* thing, knowing that you will often think of me, and will by-and-bye meet me there." He raised his finger and his eyes upward, with the beautiful and solemn look of an angel.

I caught his hand and brought it hastily down with both my own; for his words, and, above all, his manner, brought back the old prophetic fear, as if it were a blow, and made me half beside myself. "I can't have you say such things to me, Henry!" said I. "Remember! I can't any way bear it!"

He kissed my hand, looked with gentle eyes in my face a moment, and then abruptly changed the subject by asking if that was Laura he saw leave me at the house. I told him in a few hurried words—for we were already near the house—of our ride with the doctor. He smiled at my half-sincere, half-laughing complaint, that, inch by inch, the doctor is crowding me out of my place in Laura's heart.

"At any rate I shan't complain of this if it does one good thing," said Henry, extending his hands to help me out.

"What is that?" I asked.

"If it sends you away to me, as it has done this morning." I returned his smile with one as cordial; the light pressure of his hand, with one a little lighter, if I mistake not, and came into the house.

Henry has been cheerful, often gay, since the morning. His words did not probably mean so much as I fancied. I presume that he has an occasional impression that he will die early; an impression not at all rare in highly imaginative, not very strong and well young persons. They desire death when they are so weary, and the way before them looks so long and toilsome; and this yearning is the low knell of prophecy to them.

The 25th.

Letters came last evening from Uncle George, and from Augusta. Uncle George "will give his daughter away with pleasure to one of his earliest and most esteemed friends." Over this Laura is tearful and excited, but, withal, very happy. As for the doctor, he takes strong steps, as if new life were in him. Augusta "will gladly see me at Roxbury next week; for on Wednesday she will give a *fete* to our city friends and the *elite* of that place, out in the grove. And she cannot live without me! I am indispensable! I must take formal leave of my rusticity on leaving New London; for a succession of gala days will follow; not one of which can go on prosperously without me." We are all very sober and still over this. No one says to me—"don't go!" but I can see what a disappointment would be here in my place if I were to go. And I yet feel all the time that I ought to go on Agusta's account.

The 27th.

"I hope you will make up your mind not to go to Roxbury, Caroline," said dear, old grandfather this evening, as he took his seat with us. "You will be as happy here."

"And God knows how much happier *we* shall all be, if she stays," said Henry, taking a few steps away.

"Yes, do stay, dear!" chimed in grandmother, nestling close to me, and looking coaxingly in my face. "Laura will marry Dr. Cummings; and you must stay here to go like a singing bird from house to house. I desire nothing better than this. What say you, Laura?"

"That I desire nothing better," answered Laura, laughing, but with eyes full of tears nevertheless.

"And what does Caronne say?" asked Henry, after a pause, in which I thought intently on what I would do.

"That I would rather remain here, and put the flowers in Laura's hair; and then, when she

is in another home, to be here with you, Henry, and with our dear grand-parents."

Now we were all near weeping. Henry stood by my chair a moment, and then walked away to a window, without speaking. Grandmother looked lovingly in my face; and, with a quivering chin and husky voice, said—"yes, Caroline, this is what I thought you would say. I thought you would like best, here, where it is so quiet; and so I've told Henry all the time. You always did love to be here when you were a child. You remember it, father?" appealing to grandfather, who had been making vigorous work of wiping his nose, clearing his throat, and wheeling his chair so that his face would be turned away.

"Yes, I guess I do remember it! She was a dear little thing! And there is another thing I remember, and *would* remember, as long as I remember anything; and this is, that there are no two old, almost worn-out creatures in the whole world, that have so much to be thankful for as we have, mother. We have each other down to this late stage of our journey, and these three good grandchildren to be like our children to us. If they can be contented with us, I don't know of one thing more that we ought to ask."

I must go to the village ere long to remain awhile, for good Aunt Agnes begins to think that I care nothing about them or their house, since I stay away so long. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE SECOND LOVE.

A SEQUEL TO "CAROLINE BRADSHAW."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

January 18—.

It is a long time since I have written in my diary. The abstracting grief of Henry's loss overpowered the grand-parents almost, and my time was devoted to them.

Augustus Cummings remained at New London, after the funeral, for some time; and has often since been here. For awhile Uncle George could not be without his company, even for an hour. He was like a good, thoughtful son to the grand-parents; to me, like a good, thoughtful brother.

When winter approached, Uncle George went to Washington, and Augustus departed for Billerica, a parish to which he had just been called. I have visited it, and have a very dear friend belonging to it.

April.

Laura finds much to do in her new home. I sometimes think that to this is owing a part of her cheerfulness; for, with so many new duties, she has no time to give to tears. She says, however, it seems to her, that Henry is with her all the time; and whenever she does a thing, she instinctively inquires whether Henry, all pure and holy as he is now, can look on the act approvingly.

The children love her as if she were their own mother. As for the doctor, he guards her, as if she were "the apple of his eye."

June the 28th.

It is a year, to-day, since I came to New London. Little did I imagine, when I first left Augusta, that so long a period would elapse before I should see her again. But I should not have thought it right to leave the dear grand-parents; and, indeed, I could nowhere have been happier than here.

Uncle George has come to the village on a visit. Augustus Cummings has accompanied him.

July the 6th.

Augustus, who was, in our affliction, so like a brother to me, has proposed being something more than a brother. I have a great respect, a warm friendship for him, which, I doubt not, will expand, and become all I could wish to feel for a husband, when I come to know him better. Upon the strength of this belief, I have promised to be his at any time when he may present his claims. I hesitated at first on account of my

grand-parents; but my grandmother has, for a cousin, a lady of forty-five or fifty, who is very amiable, who has little property and no desirable home; and who is, withal, a scrupulous monogamist; so that grandmother counts on being able to keep her with her; and this without any sacrifices, whatever, on the widow's part. They were all, as I saw, more ready to relinquish me to Augustus, than I was to yield my own consent.

September the 11th.

Augustus has left, and Uncle George with him. They will visit together the parish at Billerica; they will visit Augusta, likewise; and then Augustus will return to his parish to make arrangements for our establishment there.

We are to be married in this house, on the spot where my parents and Augusta were; as Augusta is now well, so that she can be with me. She protests against this, however. She can't conceive how I can make up a suitable winter wardrobe here in the country. She entreats; she feels inclined to fall on her knees as she writes, begging me "to do the thing as becomes me, as becomes my station, both present and prospective." She adds—

"I prescribe white satin and little blond sleeves. I won't listen to anything else. I shall wear the same. We will be alike, only I will have no orange blossoms. Otway and I will stand with you—oh, dear! I wonder if you hear, if you attend to this, when you read it; if you think of heeding my prayer! I'll warrant you don't. I'll warrant you sit and look like a Madonna, thinking, that—no; instead of a white satin and blond trimmings, you will wear some of the rich dresses you have already, and give the price of the satin to the poor. I am ready to go into despair, just over this fancy. I tell you, Cad, my dear, give money to the poor, if you will; and I, when I have time, will do the same. We can do both; we can wear suitable dresses and give to the poor, too. Otway likes to see me splendidly dressed. He loses patience if I neglect myself even at home, and in the morning, when we are sure not to see anybody, you know. But you have had chances enough to see this. I only remind you of it; because you must see that I shall be very elegantly dressed; and then you *must* transcend me a

little, just by the rose flowers—everything else being equal—shall go into fits.

"Say! let me or the satin with mine. And do you come to Boston for the making, for bonnet, travelling dress, and the hundred and one things you must have, or be absolutely shabby. Say! won't you? I shall wait one week for your answer, hoping that you will bring it in person. And I can go with you to all the shops, you know! I know just who sells the best and cheapest articles; ah! you should just look into Jones' in these days. No! Tremont Row, you know; or, I think it as likely as not, that you don't know anything about it, you are so dull about shopping! I can't conceive how anybody can be so indifferent. I tell you, sister Cad, if I had your face, your figure, and your absolute sovereignty over a full pride, the people of Boston should see and know what beauty is! They call me beautiful, as it is; and I believe my nose and teeth and skin are faultless; while beyond this—*entre nous*—my skill in dressing does the greater part.

"Abby Rogers is with us in these days. She is as sweet as ever; sweeter; she improves. *She* dresses. She knows how to show her appreciation of the gift of personal charms, and of the silk worm. But 'neither is this to the point,' exactly; but this is—Nabby would like being invited with us to your wedding. She is very delicate about it; but I can see it would please her; as, of course, it must. And this that comes now is still more to the point; Nabby says that your dress should be white satin, by all means; for she says, while it is suitable for any bride who can afford it well, it is particularly suitable for one so tall and stately as yourself. This is what I think; it is what Otway thinks; we were talking about it this morning at breakfast.

"Only look what a letter this is already! I never wrote so long a one before. I suppose I must prolong it to tell you about Fred. The same old story—he is as mischievous as ever; plagues my life out almost, cutting things into pieces no longer than your thumb-nail, unless we keep him in constant supply of playthings. And he is so savage if he can find neither play, nor mischief! but if he can be busy, he is happier than any king; and every one says he is a very beautiful boy. He pines yet for 'Aunt Carry,' and after we have read your letters, holds them in his hands, turns them over, trying to make something out of them, always ending with a sigh, and an—'ah, I wish Aunt Carry would come home! don't you, mamma?'

"I guess I do wish she would come! *Don't* think, Cad, dear, that it is all because I am so anxious about the beautiful dress, and so on, as I fear this idle letter will incline you to. No. I

like beautiful dresses; I like beauty in any form under which it presents itself. I am proud of you, and love to see you looking like a queen; I love to make of myself something that people shall look on with pleasure; but, after all, it is your very self, and my husband, and my boy, that my heart truly delights in. I could be happy possessing you three, without the beautiful dresses; but not with all the beautiful dresses in the world, without you. So don't trouble yourself about the satin—only have it if it won't trouble you at all; for you will look well enough in any thing; still I do so want, on this one occasion, to see you in the dress I have set my heart on! But I suppose you can't feel as you would if poor Henry were alive, and all things were bright; and I won't tease you. Just love me as you always have done, and I will ask nothing more; only that you may be happy in your marriage, and in the years that shall be afterward. It would be enough to ask that you may be as happy as I am; but I have no doubt that you will be happier, because you are more reasonable and sensible, and always have been, although you were the younger.

"Freddy has kissed the page here where I write; he says you must take it off with another kiss. Otway is at the store; if he were here, there would be some stirring messages. He thinks a great deal of you; and finds the greatest pleasure in your choice. He is gay himself; but he says he is always most strongly and agreeably attracted by people like Augustus Cummings. He loves them best; and so I confess do I. Only I am a little afraid of them, withal; and would rather have my Otway for a husband, than your Augustus. I can very well understand, however, that the latter is the right one for you.

"I am so glad you will be so near! Have you thought how we will gather up our children, and our sewing, and slip back and forth in the cars? If you have ripe currants, I can go up and help pick and eat them; (only *par parenthese*, our little girls will make bad work of their light frocks, won't they?) and if I have the headache, as so often I do, you can come in, and with your gentle ways, and your hand that is so good on the hot temples, cure me directly. Won't this be good?

"Abby has returned, and I will leave off this scribbling. Don't feel under obligations to invite her, my dear Cad. She shan't know that I have intimated her wish. But if you do conclude to ask her, I think her presence will give you a pleasure. She has an excellent disposition, I am sure; flighty as she appears. Otway don't fancy her; although he is very gracious to her, because I like so well having her here. She is so young, you know, and has no mother, only a very tyrannical mother-in-law, I feel a kind of benevolent

interest in the girl, and like to keep her near me, where she so well likes to be.

"Love to all. Assure them I look forward to meeting them with lively pleasure. Assure yourself that not even Augustus loves you better than does

Your sister,

AUGUSTA."

This is the way dear Augusta always lets us see how strenuous her wishes are in the little things and the great. And while she entreats in the passionate, impulsive way, we are thinking that she is very foolish; and we shall not trouble ourselves to gratify her. But, in its vehement force, the desire is soon spent; and then she, too, thinks she is foolish, and not worth being listened to. She apologizes in her sweet, sincere manner; she begs us to follow our own pleasure and not hers; and, at this stage, we begin to see that her request was reasonable, the taste that instigated it faultless, and to be inclined to gratify her above ourselves; so that she generally has her way.

The 15th.

"Them varmints!" said Mrs. Cheever, shaking her head wrathfully, as she came up to the yard where aunt and I were standing.

"What vermin?" asked Aunt Agnes, laughing.

"Ah, them Boyntons, ter be sure! I've been there a washin' terday, an' of all the splashin' an' splurgin' they made over your consarns, Car'line! I couldn't help wonderin' 't they don't see 't their swallerin' their own words, as 't were; fer 's long 's they thought 't Arndrer wus goin' ter have ye, er! the mareg! there wus nawthin' on airth like ye. You'd been ter Charlestown seminary two years, they told everybody; you'd graduated there and settled away with ye a—a—I do know—a——"

"A diploma!" I asked.

"Yes! that! with a blue ribbin in it, they said, an' I don't know what all. But now, now they've hearn 't you're goin' ter have 'Gustus Cummins, they pooh it all away. 'Pooh!' says Angeline, terday, 'I wonder what it is ter be ter Charlestown seminary two years?' An' she says, 'I'll bate fawty dollar 'at she ha'n't got more education 'n we have, arter all. 'F she has, she don't show it.'

"Er, an' then she must go ter makin' a great finish of it, a tossin' her head an' a stickin' up 'er nose. An' the queerest on 't is, they're all so 'terblo glad 't Arndrer aint a goin' ter have ye!"

"But perhaps you ought not to tell me about it, Mrs. Cheever," said I, gently. "Perhaps they—"

"Oh, fer that matter, they said it afore me a parpose, so 't I might tell ye. I know 'em of old. It's their way, or one o' their ways o' termentin' folks that they get a miiff agin. But,

says I ter myself, you've lit on one now 't won't mind ye, ner care fer what ye say."

"Oh, but I do care, Mrs. Cheever. I am sorry to be disliked by any one."

"What! when ye 're so rich, an' goin' ter be so much richer, an' when ye 've so many ter like ye, an' speak well on ye?"

"Yes; I care just as much as if I were poor, and going soon to be poorer."

"That's sumthin' new ter me 't any rate," replied she, musing, and running a pin into the post of the gate where she was standing. "I've allers felt 's if them that's so rich an' kind o' high in the world, didn't care much, 'f any, what them that's below 'em say er think about 'em. I've thought I sh'd like ter be independunt, so 't I needn't care for anybody."

"Well, if you were to be made independent, as you say, you would find that money is one thing, and the friendliness of the world another! and that they can't be made to supply each other's place. You would still want friends, and find your gold of little worth, if you hadn't them."

"Per'aps so; but I'm sure it's a new idee ter me. Then I'm sorry I told ye, 'f ye care what they say—only on your 'count, though. They're so putchiky so often, I don't care on their parts. But I must be a joggin. You'll forgive me fer tellin' on ye, Car'line?"

"Ah, yes, indeed! Good night, Miss Cheever. Love to the grand-parents if you see them as you pass."

"Yes, I will. I'll go in a purpose. Good night, Car'line, good night, Miss Bradshaw." And she went off with long, vigorous steps. But it is too bad that she must walk so far. Uncle Harrison always sends James with her.

The 16th.

A letter, a long one, came from Augustus today. Oh—and it is so good, so kind! The solicitude for my comfort, my well-being that breathes through it all is expressed to imply, so heartily, it is as if I had the words warm from his lips, and makes him seem near to me. He nowhere tells me that he loves me, neither by his pen nor by his tongue.

I trust, however, that he does love me a little; and has made sure of being able to love me a great deal more. For myself I have no misgivings. The thought of him in my solitude since he left, the new emotion over this letter, the warmth about my heart now that I think and write of him, all show me where I am; and that I am safe, if he will love me but half as well as I will love him.

The letter was written at Billerica, at the house of my friend, Mrs. Follen. He has purchased the house of the late pastor, which is a charming

place, midway between the village, where, on a broad green, the church stands, and the residence of the Follens. I have called at the place often with Mrs. Follen; and I have remembered it since, as if it were a sweet picture.

Augustus tells me all his plans minutely, and asks me to inform him if I like them; if I agree with him in this and that arrangement, which it is desirable to have effected before I go. This husband-like deference I believe pleases me even more than the plans; although these are so good, so pleasant, I must say yes to them all, and thus make him think, I fear, that I have no opinions of my own.

He asked me to let him name an early day for making me his. The thirtieth of this month, he wishes that it may be, if I can willingly bring myself to so sudden a measure.

It is necessary that he enter upon his duties immediately; and I shall raise no objections to his wishes. We shall both be best in a home of our own, and I would gladly be there in that grand time of autumn, when the sky is so deep, and the woods are in a glow.

But now something else must be done beside this journalizing; although I have little to do in the housekeeping line, the stores left by my poor mother were so ample.

The grand-parents, whom I have been this evening to consult, sigh; Aunt Agnes sighs, and tears fill her eyes, and Laura's; but they do not try to hold me back.

The 18th.

Oh, a great blow! especially to the doctor and Laura, for by Augustus' orders, his uncle's executor advanced the legacy of the doctor, although the estate was far from being settled; and, now that he has appropriated it all in one needful way and another, a later will has come to light, by which that large property is divided amongst the charitable institutions of Boston, the largest legacy falling to the House of Industry. This will was drawn up, it seems, by an attorney who is old and partially deaf, and who, as an invalid, has been passing a year with relatives at a retired sea-board town in Connecticut. No one knew that he had been doing business for Mr. Alfred Cummings, except the witnesses. One of these is in California, the other is in Boston; but knowing that the old gentleman was often making new wills, or annexing codicils, not being called upon for testimony, he did not halt in his busy life to ask a question, or make a revelation.

But, within a few days, the attorney himself has returned to Boston and produced the new instrument. I have the intelligence by a letter from Augustus. He regrets it for my sake and for the doctor's; but he writes calmly, and like a strong man, who can face the struggle and go

through with it, and stand all the while with feet firmly planted.

He will rent the parsonage, he says, instead of purchasing it. He hardly knows me, he says; he has not heard me say what estimate I place upon wealth; but he trusts me. He trusts that I will feel with him, that the doctor's share in this disappointment, is that which we have most to regret.

He *may* trust me. If he can be as happy, if he will not feel too much the need of toil and economy in carrying out his longed-for improvements in the parsonage, in short, if he will use my fortune, feeling that it is *ours*, as much his as mine, I shall not have a single regret for ourselves. And it is not so bad for the doctor as it might be. The sum he has received of the Boyntons is a help to him; and I shall propose it to Augustus, purchasing the field that is to be the fruit-garden, and allowing the doctor to manage it as he pleases, setting out his trees and vines, as if it were *now* his own. He can, no doubt, purchase it at no distant day; Laura is so diligent, so economical; the doctor so vigorous and with so extensive a practice, there is really nothing to fear, although now the doctor looks desponding enough.

Laura is younger; it falls lightly on her; for she is buoyed up with hopes—indefinite enough they are; but surely something favorable will turn up, she thinks; there are father, grand-father, so many friends who will feel for them, and be glad to help them awhile now, until they can help themselves. The doctor smiled before I left them; but more of comfort in Laura's earnest kindness than of hope.

Augustus finds so much to do we shall not be married until two weeks later than the time appointed.

The 19th.

Neither is Laura so hopeful as she seemed. She herself is at a loss to see in what way two thousand dollars can be abstracted from their possessions, without the doctor's relinquishing every one of the pretty plans he has been talking over with such zest since they were married. And she fears he will feel obliged to deny himself, to work and worry as he did after his losses by the Boyntons, so that he will be worn and sick again. She shed some tears over this part of the picture; but she smiled through them in a moment, and began to hope again in the good things that may come in to make it lighter, easier for him than now they anticipate.

I have written to Augustus out of the fulness of a heart that trusts him, even as he trusts me; and that feels assured of happiness with him, whether our earthly lot be one of toil or ease, poverty or wealth. I have let him see that he

is dearer to me now in his misfortunes, than he was as a rich man. I shrink occasionally from the warm thought my pen was inditing, and said to myself, "nay; I will not let this go to him. I will write again, a cooler letter; and keep back the tenderness, until I have seen *his* come forth more unreservedly." I tried another, in the beginning, calling Dame Prudery to my elbow, to dictate what I should write, and to jog me, if I went amiss. But I despised the cold thing when it was written, and gave it a warming in the grate; carrying the other directly to the post-office, lest I should be troubled anew with my scruples.

Our postmaster, in want of good accommodations on his own premises, has lately established his office in Mr. Boynton's store. I met Angeline there, listlessly looking over the newspaper and other parcels.

"Good morning, Miss Caroline," said she lifting her eye-brows, and speaking with ill-concealed bitterness.

"Good morning, Angeline; how do *you* do this morning?" dropping my letter into the box.

"I'm well enough; but how do *you* do? They say you've met with quite a repulse."

"A repulse?"

"Why, yes; they say Augustus Cummings has lost all his property; or, all the property that he thought was his, rather."

"Yes; he has."

"Don't you feel bad about it?"

"Not on my own account. I am sorry for the doctor."

"Pooh! he'll poke through. There's no danger of his thick head. I'm mad that father paid him that money. But pa thought he'd give him a lift. *He's* sorry now; he says it's the same as thrown away."

"Where is your father? I would like to make a purchase, or two," said I, crossing over to the side where the English goods were kept.

"I don't know. He's always budging off somewhere or other, leaving me to tend. And now Mr. Harris is gone on a journey, and I have the post-office, too, on my hands, when pa's gone. What'll you have? I suppose you'll get all your fixings at Concord, as Miss Laura did, since there was nothing at New London good enough for her. Or, perhaps *you'll* send to Boston?"

"I won't send to Boston for sewing-cotton, at any rate, if you, or Jones & Co. can supply me."

"Well, I rather guess we can," again lifting her brows, and throwing a box of spools on the counter before me. She then stood humming and beating a tattoo on the counter with the yard-stick, as I overlooked the poor assortment of sewing-cotton.

"Did you know that Andrew came last night?"

she asked, at length; and, before I could answer, exclaimed, "there he is! there he comes! He's going to be married right away to a rich girl in Lowell, did you know it?" She concluded in a hurried whisper, for her brother was already in the shop door.

Pale, blue and red by turns, he stood a moment, at sight of me, as if paralyzed.

I felt no emotion whatever, only a yearning wish to be at peace with him, with his sister, and with all the world. I accordingly spoke to him and extended my hand. He did not advance one step to meet me; but stood stiffly in the doorway, with his angry eyes bent on the floor. Grieved, half afraid of the bitter frown, I turned to Angeline; but was far from being reassured, when I saw how stiff and indignant she stood there, bracing her short, wiry figure up with the yard-stick. In a moment, however, I was indignant. I reflected that I had not really wronged them. They had been disappointed. But it was of their own begetting—save, alas! that one, ever-to-be-deprecated hour of trifling.

The remembrance of that hour stole upon me to-day. The dear Henry—how his image softened me at once, and overcame the gathering scorn! I felt it then, as I often do, what volumes of beautiful wisdom and truth, lie in those little paragraphs that creep in with such unconscious simplicity, amongst all the odd things in Dickens' "Dombey and Son." His Captain Cuttle could bear Carker's insolence peaceably, because he thought of one among the dead, as he supposed; and "all the knaves and liars in the world, were nothing to the truth and honesty of one dead friend."

With tears in my eyes and a trembling voice, I bargained with Angeline for a half dozen spools of cotton; and then, bidding her "good morning," I left the shop, without again looking at her brother, who was still in the door, and silently made way for me to pass out.

They must have seen that they grieved me; and I hope that this, together with my forbearance, will propitiate them, and that we may part in peace.

Later.

I ran in to see Laura this evening. She was busied about the supper-table, singing softly and cheerfully, as she went from table to closet, and from closet to table; while the doctor, although his head was bent over his paper a little, yet had his eyes upturned, watching her graceful household ways. I was fairly within the room, and standing holding my bonnet by the strings, when they looked round and saw me.

Yes; I was in the right time to sit down and drink tea with them, and listen to all they had to tell me of Uncle Harrison's goodness, of dear,

old grandfather's goodness. They had both been there, not in concert, but at different hours, each unaware of the intention of the other, but offering to put the doctor entirely at his ease. There is nothing to hinder them, they said; the doctor may take his own time for repaying them. There shall be no hurry, no anxiety about it; if it is never paid, no matter; the doctor deserved something at their hands, for all that he had been to them in times of sickness and trial, "to say nothing of the little Laura," grandfather said, "who deserves one thousand dollars, for all the comfort and help she has been to him and grandmamma."

"Yes," chimed in Laura, with an animated face, as the doctor concluded accounts of the last piece of good fortune. "Like them, isn't it, being so delicate about it? Ah, they are so good! What do you think I sing all the time, to-day, Caroline?"

"Father, whate'er of earthly good."

"No; I have sung that a great deal lately; but since they were here I sing, over again and again,

"And darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

She warbled the lines in her sweet, bird-like voice, with tearful eyes, and hands giving the finishing adjustments to the tea-things.

She went out to bring the girls and Charles Augustus from their sports. The last named came into the room like a man; but the girls were clinging with both hands to hers, Clara with womanly steps, like her young mother; Jane skipping, laughing, and describing a mischievous game she had just been playing upon the others.

The 23rd.

The hours moved so slowly to-day! because I kept thinking, that, when the mail came in, there would be a letter from Augustus for me, or he himself would come. The stage-coach went swinging and rumbling by at last, and then I could no longer attend at all to what Aunt Agnes was saying. How good he is! and he is mine, and I am his! I kept saying to myself; and every moment my heart beat louder and louder; and the warmth and the dream-like happiness went through my whole being.

When it was time for Uncle Harrison to come, aunt laughed, and I laughed; but it did not hinder me in going out to meet him.

"No," said he, shaking his head, and quickening his steps, as he approached me. "You have a letter from your sister; but none from him."

I received and opened it languidly; but, as I ran my eye listlessly down the page, I encountered his name, and my interest revived, although I was still disappointed, and the warmth was

gone from me. I begged uncle to go on with the rest of the packages and leave me to saunter homeward, and I read my own.

Augusta's letter was commenced the day before she heard of the new will, and was—but I may as well transcribe it. It will occupy me; and I am not in the mood to be below, where is considerable company; nor can I read; that is, anything but Augusta's letter. She says of Augustus—

"He is spending this week in town, and is in every day. He and Otway get on finely together. Otway is so sensible, you know; or, perhaps you don't know; for I never discovered before, that he knows so much, and can talk so nicely. He lets his humor come in, every now and then, and this does Augustus not a little good. I am glad that you can be lively, as well as serious; it will help him not a little, when he has tired his brain over the sermons.

"As for poor, stupid me, I am afraid of him yet; although I like him better and better. One must respect him infinitely. He has the manner I always like to see in a clergyman. I like the calm dignity, the serious eyes, showing that he knows what a great thing he has undertaken; and then the cheerfulness, as if he found pleasantness in the ways and peace in the paths. I can never bear the gloomy austerity so many clergymen wear. I never take it for a sign that they are better than anybody else, but that they are cross, and, therefore, not quite so good. But I suppose the cross looks are natural to some; yet, do you remember what Hood says?

'No solemn, sanctimonious face I pull,
And think I'm pious, when I'm only bilious'—

or something of this sort.

"I fear I haven't a bit of piety in me; but if I had, I would like it to be like Augustus', like St. Evremonds'. You remember what he says—'my piety is composed more of justice and charity than of penitence. I rest my confidence in God, and hope everything from his benevolence. In the bosom of Providence I find my repose and my felicity.' Believe me, Cad, these beautiful words make me sigh to be a Christian, just as does your bridegroom's beautiful life. You are a happy child; and this is what Abby says continually. She, too, is afraid of Augustus; but she is always half crazed to be hold of that which is beyond her reach, whether it be in the shape of the friendship of a fashionable lady, a cashmere shawl, or a good saint, like Augustus, who passes her by on the other side. Thus, as you must have seen, she is ambitious and restless; still the passion may sometimes work favorably. In this instance, it is leading her to try and shape herself into the gentle, quiet woman, that shall get the approbation of—in short, of your

man. But don't be jealous, Cad. She can't please him; and if she could, she would turn her back to him, on the instant he was gained, in pursuit of a something new, and afar off.

"She is constant only to me; and I dare say her worship in this quarter has fallen off not a little since——

"This is horrible! Otway interrupted me. He came from Augustus, and told me that every cent is gone to the charitable institutions. What do you think I said in the first surprise? But you would never guess; you will meet it so differently. It was—'oh! I wish there were no charitable institutions in the country!' Wasn't that Christian and reasonable?

"Otway was as insensible as an oyster over it; only he *does* pity Dr. Cummings and poor, little Laura! He says Augustus is rather anxious on your account. Oh, dear! and well he may be! You have enough for comfort, I suppose; and then there will be the thousand dollars salary; but after such splendid expectations, this seems meagre enough. So Abby says. She has some natural feeling about it, which those two men have not. She is grateful for your invitation. I almost wish now, that it had not been given; for I know you won't hear a word about anything costly; and she is such a stickler for *la mode* on bridal occasions, especially, and something of a gossip, withal, if it is not ungenerous to give her extreme sociability so harsh a name.

"I wish I could know this minute how you will bear the disappointment. You won't feel it near so deeply as I should, in your place; still I can't help believing that it will trouble you; and I find myself pitying you, and longing to steal away from them all, to come in here and write to you. I love patience with the interruptions. When I came thirty minutes ago, I bade Abby not to send for me if any one else came. I heard the bell soon after; she obeys me; but now the dinner hour approaches and I will go.

Evening.

"It was Augustus; and Abby had reached him, I fancy, from her animated look. He was waiting for Otway; but Otway was almost sure not to be here for another half hour, as the puss well knew; (by *puss* meaning Abby, of course,) although I think she kept Augustus upon the pretence, that he might be expected every moment. Again unjust to her! probably she was deceived in the hour; and thought it nearer the time for dinner.

"Augustus was graver than usual. He looked a little wearied; but, otherwise, well. He left immediately, when he found it must be so long; he has much to do; but hopes to be able to visit New London, going directly from Billerica, Monday morning. But of course he has written this to you. I need not sit up all night, troubling

you with 'twice-told tales.' Good night then, dearest; may the angels be with you while you sleep and when you wake; for one needs their comfort in this world, where there is so much trouble of one kind and another.

Later.

"What have you done, dearest Cad? What did you write to Augustus? He is as pale as if he were dead, but says he is well. When I asked him if he had heard from you since yesterday, he merely said, 'yes,' turning hastily away to a window, not, however, before I had a chance to see an expression of pain, and I don't know what; but as if he were greatly shocked, he looked. He stood a minute with his back to us, without speaking. When he turned and spoke to us, he was very calm and kind, but so pale! and not at all cheerful.

"I hope you haven't rejected him. And surely it can't be. Some giddy thing who likes wealth and parade as well as Abby does, might cast him off now that he is poor; but you would not; I wouldn't do it, by any means, vain as I am. I like him better than I did before. I love him now as if he were my own brother; and, oh, I pity him so since he was here to-day!

"But don't be frightened, child, at what I write. I am always excited and flustered, you know, over every new thing that gets hold of me. I have just been talking with Otway about it; and he held my hands and looked me in the face, and bade me be quiet and think about it rationally awhile, and then I should see as he saw, that my fancy was running away with me.

"'Do you think it possible,' said he, 'for one like our sister Cad, to reject one like Augustus Cummings, because he is poor—and on the very point of marriage, too?'

"'Why, no—I don't. But don't hold my fingers so tight; you make them ache.'

"'Do I? Be quiet then; sit still and I will let you go. If she wouldn't reject him, if this is impossible, what shocking thing can have happened? See if you can conceive any.'

"'Not when you are pinning me down to it in this way. But I have thought of fifty altogether possible things, that may have happened since yesterday, and every one of them shocking.'

"He laughed outright now; he had been smiling triumphantly, all along.

"'Nonsense!' said he, when his laugh was over. 'The fact is, your imagination and Nabby Rogers' have been *tandem* since Augustus was here; and, together, they make a team, compared with which John Gilpin's and Tam O'Shanter's were docile and tractable.'

"'Ah, you man, you! you are abominably insulting! But what can it be? He was pale, and certainly, not at all cheerful, to say the tamest

thing that can be said. See if *'you* can account for it.'

"'Certainly not!' opening his eyes wide on me; and looking as if I were foolish in making such a demand of him. 'I can believe,' he added, 'that Caroline's letter didn't meet his wishes in every respect. He is in a delicate position; accepted as a man of great wealth, and not knowing her as we do, he is unavoidably sensitive, and some part of her letter may have disappointed him. Or, it may not have done it. Goodness? think how much he has to harass him just now! I wonder how he bears it as he does. Some men, and strong ones, too, would take their beds; others would go crazy; and here you and Nabby have been racking your brains with conjectures, because he is pale and serious; because he looked a little disturbed! Nonsense! nonsense! I tell you, my wife, he expected to do everything for Caroline; but suddenly he finds that he can do nothing. I can imagine better than you, that he must find it something of a stroke. Don't you see?'

"'Yes,' I sighed, in reply. 'I see that even you have failed to place the subject in a cheerful light.'

"'Perhaps so; but if it is the true one, we are men and women and can bear to contemplate it thus. I am confident that Augustus and Caroline can bear it; and it is a pity, therefore, if you and I cannot.'

"'This made me feel better. Yes; thought I, we can all bear it. We can see that people can be happy, if they are not 'as rich as the Jews.'

You and Augustus will demonstrate this to us. God bless you both, prays

Your loving sister,

AUGUSTA."

I have racked my brain; I have recalled my last letter to mind, sentence by sentence, until I think I recollect every word of it; and I am at an utter loss to understand how it could disappoint him—unless it was too forward; unless I took too much pains to let him see that I do not miss his wealth, that I can love him under any and all circumstances of life. I know his tastes in character and conduct, as in everything else, are pure and delicately refined, beyond those of any other person that I have ever known. Yet he always seems to have consideration and wonderful forbearance for things that are amiss. He readily sees some reason for it, and does not condemn it, as others do. I could indeed wish that this charity might be extended to me and that letter of mine.

But perhaps I am on the wrong track; for I, too, like Augustus, am excited and unable to reason clearly. As Otway said, he must have have many things to harass him, poor man! I hope I shall have a letter to-morrow. I hope he will come up Monday; and then all must be clear; for, although not a talker, he speaks now and then; and his words, when he speaks, and his face, when he does not speak, are as open as the day.

Heaven keep him and me! Heaven help us to love each other; and it is little I shall heed the rest.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE LILY OF L——.

A STORY OF NEW YEAR'S EVE.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

NEVER shall I forget the last New Year's Eve I passed in the village of D——. Even at this day, the strange and terrible event, which has impressed indelibly upon my soul the memory of that night, haunts my imagination in the dark mid-winter hours, and not unfrequently disturbs my dreams. I have often thought it singular, that it is only at the close of the year—in the dull and dreary December—that these recollections force themselves upon me with any degree of force. It must be something in the association of the season with the incident. Whatever it may be, it is that *something* which impels me at this moment to look back with memory fresh and strong to that fearful night, and relate its story.

It was the night of the thirty-first of December. There was to be a grand ball at P——, a village eleven miles from L——; youth and pleasure meeting to dance at the funeral of the old year, and to welcome with hilarious mirth the birth of the new.

A considerable party of young people in L——, early made preparations to attend this ball. I was one of a company of six *gentlemen*—as boys advanced in their teens like to be called—who chartered a large sleigh, to be drawn by four splendid black horses, and to be driven by the celebrated horse-tamer, F——, (so well known in L——, and who may be still living there) whose services we considered ourselves fortunate in having secured.

It was just seven o'clock in the evening, when F—— having faithfully picked up our party in different parts of the village, we set out from L——. The air was bitter cold; the glowing constellations twinkled with unsurpassed brilliancy in the clear, frosty sky; the crisp snow crackled and shrieked beneath the hoofs of the horses and the runners of the sleigh; and the chime of bells filled all the air.

We were a merry party; and on setting out, every heart seemed to beat in joyful unison with the chime of the bells. Well provided with straw and "buffaloes," we boldly defied the cold, and only laughed the louder when we felt the frost spirit tingling in our fingers and toes, and maliciously attacking our faces.

Having been disappointed in not being able to obtain for a companion the young queen of my

heart—who had cruelly engaged herself for another scene of pleasure, although she knew I expected her to go with me to the ball, I was the "bachelor" of the company; all my companions being provided with partners. To conceal the aching void in my heart, I assumed an exceeding gayety, and declared myself happy in my liberty, since it afforded me an opportunity to try my skill at driving four in hand. F—— accommodated me with the reins, and I used them so as to command his approbation, and at the same time to excite emulation in the hearts of one or two of my companions.

When I was too cold to enjoy driving any longer, I crept into the body of the sleigh, in the midst of the buffaloes and straw which enveloped the party; and William G—— proposed to take my place.

"No—do not, William," I heard his partner say, in a beseeching voice.

This was Lizzie Lord—who will not blush now to see her name written in full! With the exception of my perfidious *Mary*, I looked upon Lizzie as the most charming girl in our village. She was then sixteen—tall, slender, graceful—in short, the most perfect lily of love I ever behold. My *Mary* was a rose. Had I preferred lilies to roses, I might have preferred Lizzie to *Mary*. As it was, I thought her without an equal in beauty and grace—with one exception.

William was Lizzie's beau. They were quite devoted to each other, and quarrelled often enough for their friends to suppose there was a great deal of jealous love on both sides. They had had some sort of misunderstanding that evening. William had been somewhat too attentive to some other fair one; and Lizzie's feelings had been hurt.

It might have been as much spite as emulation of my driving, which prompted William to volunteer to take the reins.

As I said before, Lizzie begged him not to change his seat. He was by her side of course.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Oh!" said Lizzie—"I am so cold! But go, if you like," she added, in a trembling voice.

I suppose William was ashamed then to yield.

"Are you cold?" he asked, somewhat earnestly. But he added quickly, in a gay tone, alluding to myself—

"Well, Fred will keep you warm! He understands it! Ha! ha! do your duty, Fred!"

And William took his seat with the driver. I sat down by Lizzie's side. Too gallant to allow William's suggestion to pass without taking advantage of it, I let my arm gently glide around the Lily. She as gently repulsed me; and heaving a sigh, I took care of my unruly arm. I was sorry I had not put it where it belonged at first. Lizzie was nevertheless inclined to flirt.

I tried to talk with her without meeting with much encouragement toward sociability; and I was not at all sorry when William finally returned to claim his seat.

I heard him whisper to Lizzie; but she answered him very briefly. I thought she must be very angry with him to be so silent.

"Are you cold now?" he asked.

"Not now."

"Why don't you talk then?"

"I don't feel like talking," answered Lizzie, in a low tone.

"You are angry with me!"

"I am not angry, William."

"Displeased!"

Lizzie made no reply.

"Well, if you are," said William, between his teeth, "I can't help it. It is impossible for me to please you always. You are continually getting angry with me about trifles. When you get over it, just let me know."

I always thought William was a little cruel. He turned to Jane H——, and began to converse with her in the gayest tone he could command. Still Lizzie said nothing. She only sighed.

Once more I endeavored to draw her into conversation; but she scarcely answered me. Observing my object, William put his face to hers, and said with a light laugh—

"Are you pleased yet?"

She made no reply; but seated herself in a more comfortable position on the bottom of the sleigh.

"Let her pout," laughed William. "I am used to it. She'll get over it soonest if you leave her alone."

I must confess I was partly of his opinion, and thinking I had done all duty demanded, resolved to follow his advice. I did not speak to the Lily again. She sat motionless and silent on the bottom of the sleigh.

Meanwhile all was gayety around her. William's laugh was loudest. I joined in the general mirth. In our merriment we sung in full chorus, the silvery voices of the girls, and the clear, rich tones of their partner's ringing out with the joyously jingling bells upon the cold air beneath the twinkling stars!

And the four black horses pranced gaily; and

still the snow shrieked and crackled beneath runners and hoofs; and as we flew onward dark fences seemed jagged lines traced upon the white ground.

Still Lizzie, in the midst of all this mirth, sat motionless and silent on the bottom of the sleigh.

Thus we arrived at D——. F—— drove up to the hotel, where the ball was to be, in grand style, wheeling the four blacks in a beautiful circle, and bringing the sleigh within half an inch of the steps. Just at that time our merry voices were pouring forth the stirring tones of the *Canadian boatman's song*, which to my ear had never sounded so beautiful, and grand, and full of soul-inspiring melody as on that winter night. I do not like to hear it now. Ever since it brings that scene vividly before me, and fills my soul with sadness! Oh, memory! how dost thou, by one link, drag up from the dark gulf of the past the endless chain of joys and sorrows, forged in the fiery furnace of youth! Its clanking falls heavily upon my heart, like the solemn sound of Sabbath bells!

Our song ceased with the chime of the sleigh bells. Our merriment had protected us against the cold, and it was no great matter to overcome the numb sensation which sitting long in one position had produced; and we rose upon our feet. Youths leaped to the steps, and with playful complaints of being frozen, the girls, with their assistance, did the same. With one exception. Lizzie sat still.

"Lizzie," said William.

There was no reply.

"She is asleep!" said one of the girls, gaily.

"I'll risk that in the noise we made!" exclaimed another.

"She is making believe!" said William, peevishly. "She is only waiting for me to get out of the way. Well, I'll humor her. Fred, be so good as to escort her in when she is ready!"

And William—to show himself independent, I have always supposed—walked proudly into the hotel.

"Come, Lizzie!" exclaimed Ellen V——, impatiently, "we are waiting for you."

"She is actually asleep!" said I. "She would not act so, I am sure, if she was not. Take hold of her."

Ellen shook her companion's shoulder. The Lily only drooped the more. Ellen pushed aside the thick veil, and endeavored to raise her head.

"She won't wake up!" she exclaimed, half frightened.

"There is something wrong," muttered F——, who had given the reins to the ostler.

"I am afraid!" said Ellen, starting back. "I—I—think she has fainted!"

F—— bounded into the sleigh. I saw him

tear the thick glove from his hand, and lay his palm on Lizzie's face. A suppressed exclamation escaped his lips; no more; and lifting the Lily in his arms as if she had been an infant, he bore her hastily into the hotel.

A vague terror came over me. I believe I feared the worst. Uncertainty made horror more horrible. I heard F—— call for help the moment he entered the hall, and being wholly beside myself with fear, I rushed into the public parlor. I met William G—— near the door.

"There is something the matter with Lizzie," I articulated.

Either my words or my manner conveyed a fearful meaning to William's heart. Laughter died on his lips. Mirth faded from his countenance. He became deathly pale.

"With Lizzie!" he gasped.

Making a strong effort to appear self-possessed in the presence of the crowd which pressed around me, I said—"I think she is dying!"

A cry of consternation quivered on every lip. Only William was silent. He disappeared like a shadow. No direction was needed to lead him to the Lily. Already a crowd pressing around her indicated the spot where she lay in the arms of those who were endeavoring to restore sensation.

It was too late!

I heard a murmur fall from the ashy lips of Jane H——, who had penetrated the throng and obtained a view of her companion.

"FROZEN TO DEATH!"

Dizzy and faint I turned away. For a moment I seemed staggering through a horrid dream. The walls reeled around me. Ghastly faces and spectral forms floated before my vision in a mist.

My perfect consciousness was restored by

seeing a pale figure approach, with wild gestures of despair. It was William! His face was haggard; I never saw a countenance so full of grief unutterable. He wrung his hands, and muttered,

"Lizzie! Lizzie!"

That was all. I took him by the hand. I endeavored to say something—I hardly know what—something to lessen his grief—but he pushed me from him with a desperate gesture, and falling heavily upon a chair with his hands clasped fiercely to his brow, groaned aloud.

How deeply was the terror of that night stamped into my young and inexperienced heart! How vividly the scene flashes now upon my soul! Once more I seem to gaze on the pale face of the Lily as she lay in the cold embrace of death, still beautiful in the magnificence of her ball-room dress!

Oh, the vain and hollow heart of youth! Not even the fate of one so young and fair could check the mad pulse of mirth, or impress a serious thought upon the gay beings who had met to celebrate the death of another year! The music pealed forth its joyous tones; the dance went on; the ball-room resounded with gayety; and in another chamber lay the corpse of the beautiful and young; and there we, her grief-stricken friends, poured forth our lamentations over the untimely dead!

William has now a fair young bride, and he is happy; but I ween the solemn anthems of those winter winds—the golden constellations which glow in these winter skies—even the chime of bells and the measures of the dance—often and often call up to his soul remembrances of the fair Lily of L——, and of that fearful New Year's Eve—as they do to this saddened heart of mine!

THE HIGGINBOTHAMS.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

COMING events are said to cast their shadows before; but everything at the Northwells proceeded just as though nothing different from usual were about to occur. Mr. Northwell went to his lawyer's office, as was his daily custom; Mrs. Northwell, after alternately teasing and fascinating, as was *her* daily custom, stepped to the mirror to arrange her curls under a coquettish little cap; and very well pleased at what she saw there, appeared not at all inclined to leave the spot.

Yet, as she stood there, she did think of Mr. Northwell, and with a little pique too, as she then called to mind their conversation. If this gentleman had one little imperfection thrown in to balance his numerous excellencies, it was an overweening family pride. According to his own account, no ancestry could have been more splendid than his; and it was really a marvel how so many other families ever contrived to obtain possession of so much wealth, since the Northwells had been represented as owning almost every place in the Union. Mr. Northwell classed among his most valuable possessions an old, stained piece of parchment, carefully framed, which traced back the family of the Northwells, in the most satisfactory manner, almost to the days of Adam and Eve. Mr. Northwell had been known to catch up this precious relic on an alarm of fire, to the entire neglect of jewelry and valuables; and his wife laughingly insisted that every time he read it over, his head rose several inches higher in consequence—which must have been rather inconvenient, for he measured six feet in a tame state.

There was also a wonderful book, chiefly remarkable for being very clumsy and tedious: "the History of the Northwell Family"—the members of which were distinguished for a multiplicity of wives and children; and it really seemed as though the Northwells could join hands, like an interminable string of paper babies, and dance around the globe. This book contained some distinguished portraits of governors, and other great men, whom Mrs. Northwell pronounced "horrid old frights," and whom her husband gazed at with affectionate reverence; which was not at all lessened by the fact that his existence began long after theirs was finished.

This pride of family was Mr. Northwell's pet

hobby; and his wife was often quite confounded by the grand stories he related, to which she could find no match in the annals of her own family; for they, although of a good old stock, sank into utter insignificance before the grandeur of the Northwells. And yet she thought it a little remarkable that she never saw any of these relatives, for never had man fewer than Mr. Northwell, but, as he said, nothing could induce them to leave Rhode Island, which they considered the one inhabitable spot upon the face of the earth; and in consequence of the distance, all intercourse between them had ceased for a number of years.

But Mr. Northwell had once spoken laughingly of a visit he made these relations when a little boy; and having been brought up to entertain feelings of reverential awe for the house in which his father, and an unending string of grandfathers, had been born, he was surprised to find it a desponding-looking tenement, which stood on a sandy shore, and quite disdained the companionship of trees. At night the beating of the surge was a sound of never-ceasing gloom; by day existence was a blank. The homestead was embellished by the presence of about a dozen gigantic cousins; who dined in their shirt-sleeves, and in shaking hands really made a toil of pleasure. His wife appeared so much amused by this recital, that Mr. Northwell, rather frightened at what he had done, immediately related a story of such fearful magnificence that it almost obliterated all remembrance of the slip alluded to.

Mrs. Northwell uttered an exclamation of impatience as a servant announced that Mrs. Sanderson was in the drawing-room; and she very unwillingly descended the stairs to meet her visitor. This Mrs. Sanderson was a cousin of Mr. Northwell's, and quite as much puffed up with family pride as himself. She was an elderly lady, with no children; and had, therefore, abundance of time to devote to the concerns of her friends. Mrs. Northwell she had a particular wish to take in hand; she considered her entirely too extravagant, too fond of company, and too much disposed to have her own way.

As Mrs. Northwell entered, she perceived from the expression of her visitor's countenance, that something unusual was about to be divulged;

and provokingly refrained from manifesting the least curiosity. Mrs. Sanderson could hold in no longer.

"Have you heard the news?" said she, at length.

"No," replied Mrs. Northwell, with a smile, "have the Dutch taken Holland?"

Without noticing the easy indifference of her hostess, Mrs. Sanderson continued, as though her words involved the welfare of the Republic. "Cousin Stacy Higginbotham, and Henrietta have arrived in town!"

She glanced at her companion, expecting delight and astonishment; but Mrs. Northwell looked reflective. Higginbotham? the name seemed familiar; where had she heard it?—Quite aghast, she now remembered that a Cousin Higginbotham had figured in one of her husband's grandest stories. The enemy, then, had arrived. Mechanically she listened to Mrs. Sanderson's pompous narrations.

"Mrs. Higginbotham," said she, "is very much of an invalid; she has been in close attendance on a crazy husband, who has now left her a fortune; and she has come to the city for the express purpose, she says, of finding her relations. Poor Henrietta! I feel for *her*."

Seeing that it was expected of her, Mrs. Northwell asked what particular disaster had impoverished Henrietta.

"It is a sad story," continued her visitor, "some years ago, Henrietta had a sister, older than herself, who married Arault Pepperworth. Of course, you have heard of *him*. Henrietta was suspected of a preference for him; and after the wedding, she became very quiet and melancholy. After awhile the sister died—and in two years Arault Pepperworth offered himself to Henrietta. She accepted him, and seemed to become quite a different person. The wedding-clothes were all made, and the preparations for a grand wedding commenced; when Arault, who was an elder in the church, took it into his head that he ought not to marry his wife's sister. He came and told her so; and after he had gone, Henrietta quietly locked up the cake put away her wedding-clothes, and sat down to her knitting. Arault married some one else; but, before a great while, this wife died too. He appeared now to have forgotten his scruples, for he again offered himself to Henrietta, who refused him—telling him that she was not an old glove to be cast off and on at pleasure. A third time he committed matrimony; and his last wife has now been dead about a year. They say that Henrietta has hopes of him yet; but he appears to be very moderate, and always does things his own way."

Mrs. Northwell refrained from showing her

amusement at these family relations; for her husband's eyes seemed to be looking sternly down upon her; and she sympathized as well as she was able in the trials of Henrietta Higginbotham.

"Of course," continued the visitor, "you will wish to call upon Cousin Stacy?"

Mrs. Northwell at first, gave a start of dissent; but then as she remembered that Mrs. Higginbotham was an invalid, and thought of the pleasure it would give her husband, she concluded to accept the invitation. Her toilet was rather more protracted than usual; for she was now about to face those terrible relatives who had haunted all her married life. At length, however, she descended; and with her pretty pink bonnet, and soft curls, looked the very personification of a Hebe. Following her visitor's advice not to take the carriage, she set out on foot to storm the enemy's quarters.

The Higginbothams had esconced themselves with another member of the family, who was reduced to the necessity of taking boarders; and after repeated rings at the bell, the visitors were admitted by a slovenly-looking Irish girl, and ushered into a small parlor. This was one of those hopeless-looking rooms that strike dismay into the heart of an adventurer; and seating themselves on a sofa, which Mrs. Northwell asserted was stuffed with bricks, they awaited the entrance of these unknown cousins. Some time elapsed; heavy footsteps were distinctly audible overhead, and there was a constant opening and shutting of doors. The stairs creak, or, to use a figurative expression, groan beneath their burden—the door is thrown open—and enter the invalid.

Mrs. Northwell had expected to see a tall, thin lady—one who would, at least, have the decency to be pale and interesting; but a large, stout woman entered, whom Mrs. Sanderson clasped affectionately, and introduced as Cousin Stacy. She bore a much stronger resemblance to the hostess of a country inn than a delicate invalid; and looked as though she had never experienced a day's sickness in her life. Her reception of Mrs. Northwell was patronizing, and her manner of talking very loud and pompous. Her daughter, who followed behind, looked exactly like one who had been crossed in love; and appeared very quiet and subdued. Her age might have been thirty-five. Mrs. Northwell found it impossible to draw her into conversation; and finally gave up the attempt in despair.

Mrs. Higginbotham, with an expressive roll of her eyes, said that "she loved the very name of Northwell," (she had been a Northwell herself) and spoke as though she always kept a large stock of affection on hand, to bestow upon any

chance member of that fortunate family who might happen to turn up. Mrs. Northwell could scarcely suppress her smiles as she glanced at these scions of a wonderful family, and thought of her own elegant relations; she concluded that these must be importations from the homestead her husband had visited in his boyish days.

Mrs. Higginbotham had entered into a long discussion with Mrs. Sanderson upon family affairs—Henrietta was looking at, and thinking of nothing—and Mrs. Northwell caught herself suppressing a yawn. For want of other occupation she took an inventory of Henrietta's dress; and came to the conclusion that there are more becoming things in the world than sage-colored silk, and home-made collars. Her hair was not arranged at all—it looked as though it had turned into the comb of its own accord; and the visitor could not help contrasting the mother's toilet with the daughter's. Mrs. Higginbotham, to be sure, had not displayed any very great taste in the cap of cotton lace, trimmed with a gaudy ribbon, or the dress of bright green Circassian; but it was evidently put on with some degree of care, and not, like Henrietta's, thrown upon her at random.

Mrs. Northwell was just debating upon the possibility of keeping her eyes open any longer, when her companion rose to go; and with a sigh of ineffable relief, she gladly seconded the motion. Mrs. Higginbotham was loud in her regrets at their short stay, and sent a most affectionate message to Mr. Northwell; promising to come soon and return the visit. Henrietta said nothing, and looked less.

Once fairly seated again in her own boudoir, Mrs. Northwell indulged her risible faculties, which had been very much excited all day. Her eyes, still beaming with mirth, encountered the valued parchment, setting forth the whole genealogy of the Northwell family, and her merriment became almost uncontrollable. Her laughter still rang through the apartment when her husband entered; and the effort to control her merriment only made it worse. Catching the infection of her silvery tones, Mr. Northwell too laughed, as he exclaimed:

"You are really incorrigible, Ada; I suppose that, as usual, you are laughing at nothing?"

Mrs. Northwell broke forth afresh. "Nothing!" said she, "indeed! Do you call two hundred pounds nothing? for I am sure she weighed at least that. Oh, but," said she, recollecting herself, "I ought to be more grave, for I have just seen some relations of yours."

Here she went off again.

Mr. Northwell glanced at his pedigree, and braced himself up with the consciousness of his grandeur.

"Is it possible!" said he, with a grave expression of delight, "who were they? Any of Cousin Peleg Ketcheram's family, or Aunt Keziak Popperham's daughters, or perhaps some branch of Uncle Kit Gildergrass' family?"

This list of excruciating names increased Mrs. Northwell's struggle for gravity; and the gentleman paced the floor impatiently until she gasped forth Cousin Stacy Higginbotham. This was a pinnacle of grandeur to which he had scarcely raised his eyes; why the Higginbothams were the great people of Rhode Island—the very top of the family tree! and he frowned, almost in earnest, at his wife's ludicrous description of her visit.

"Dress," said he, majestically, "is nothing—I look at the mind."

"I looked too," replied his wife, with another outburst, "but I didn't see anything. It was like the boy whom his father sent to Lorenzo Dow, with an intimation that his son was too much disposed to hide his talents in a napkin. 'I have shaken the napkin, at every corner,' was the message that accompanied the boy's return, 'and I find that it is empty.'"

Mr. Northwell would not join in a laugh against his own family; and abruptly left the room. He also took the earliest opportunity of paying his respects to these scions of so noble a stock; and if he were a little surprised at their external appearance, carefully refrained from making his wife the confidant of his sentiments.

Time passed on; their visits remained unreturned, and the name of Higginbotham had almost faded from the volatile mind of Mrs. Northwell. She sat one day, in the drawing-room window, watching with some degree of interest the movements of two ladies, who appeared to be searching for some place they were unable to find. Suddenly, as their faces were turned toward her, the whole truth flashed upon her—they were *Mrs. Higginbotham and Henrietta!* Her first impulse was to hide herself, and pretend that she had not seen them; but then, with a smile at this childishness, she advanced to the door as the ladies were announced.

Mrs. Higginbotham had donned a green velvet hat, with plumes that stood up, and plumes that stood down; and Henrietta looked, if possible, more dowdy than before. Having seated her guests, the next thing was to entertain them; and this, as Mrs. Northwell found, was not so easily done. The mother enacted the duchess—the daughter the nonentity; and like a school-girl waiting her composition, she glanced up at the ceiling, and down at the floor, in search of inspiration; but she found that it was like "calling spirits from the vasty deep:"

"But will they come when you do call for them?"

At length, however, Mr. Northwell came to her relief; and quietly giving up to him the task of playing the agreeable, she watched with considerable amusement his "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," which Mrs. Higginbotham received as though they were not the half of what she deserved. Mr. Northwell was apparently quite abashed by the noontide splendor of the old lady's invincible self-conceit; and coincided with everything she said in the most deferential manner.

At length Mrs. Higginbotham rose majestically from the sofa, and Henrietta followed her example. Now came "the tug of war." First Mrs. Higginbotham complained of a pain in her head, and sank back again; and Henrietta sank in concert. Mrs. Northwell ran for some cologne and bay water; but when she returned her visitor was in a hysterical state, supported by Mr. Northwell and Henrietta. Her hat and shawl were removed; and she was deposited upon the sofa, until sufficiently recovered to be moved up stairs. Her daughter did not appear to be very much alarmed; she said that her mother was subject to these attacks.

"How long do they generally last?" inquired Mrs. Northwell, somewhat anxiously.

"About a week," replied Henrietta, coolly.

"Were it not for your mother," said Mr. Northwell, politely, "I should esteem it a fortunate occurrence that has made you my guests."

His wife could not echo the sentiment. She fairly growled as she thought of the pleasant little party she had invited for Christmas week, now near at hand, and wished the Higginbothams at the North Pole. Henrietta took things very coolly; and Mrs. Higginbotham accepted their attentions with the air of a queen. She was established in the best bed-room, and appeared to feel very much at home. Her daughter said that no physician was necessary; all that she needed was rest and quiet. Mrs. Northwell smiled at this remark, as tray after tray, breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and tea entered the invalid's apartment; but like the spider's victim, "never came down again." Mrs. Higginbotham said that "all that kept her up was eating—were it not for that she did think she must sink."

The invalid required at least one servant devoted to her; and Mrs. Northwell appropriated to this service a little girl, whom she had taken more from charity than an expectation of profiting by her services; for among the many well-trained domestics, Mary was quite a superfluity. This had fostered a disposition for indolence and ease, which Mrs. Higginbotham seemed determined to eradicate; and her hostess observed, with a smile, that if she succeeded in making anything of Mary, it would be some recompense

for the Higginbotham infliction. The child flew up stairs and down like one possessed; she started at the first sound of the sick-room bell, and seemed bent on distinguishing herself in the eyes of Mrs. Higginbotham. "What a smart, little thing it is!" the invalid would remark, and like a spell, it seemed to excite the child to almost incredible feats.

Mrs. Northwell found that entertaining the Higginbothams was like receiving a sovereign; their followers gathered around them so rapidly that the elegant establishment of Walton Northwell was as much public property as the premises of a hotel. Branches of the family to the fiftieth degree clustered around its prop and stay; until Mrs. Higginbotham fairly rivalled the old woman of childish memory, who lived in a shoe. One old lady insisted upon sitting up with the invalid, and fulfilled her intention by turning Mrs. Northwell out of her boudoir, and snoring all night; another anxious friend would come and read to her—establishing herself as the Northwells' visitor at luncheon, dinner, and tea; others were constantly bringing all kinds of eatables, until the room was fairly turned into a restaurant.

Mr. Northwell was now so accustomed to encounter strange faces on the stairs, that a company of housebreakers might have carried off the valuables before his very face; he would have set them down as friends of Mrs. Higginbotham.

"I really do not see," said his wife, one evening, "what I have done to deserve this visitation—I am sure I have not been very wicked lately. By-the-bye, my dear," she continued, with a most mischievous look, "how pleasant it must be for you to have all your family relations collected about you—so very refreshing—particularly those whom you have never seen till now. But I haven't that to keep me up, and I feel rather tired."

At first, Mr. Northwell pretended to shake his provoking little wife; but as she only laughed, he was obliged to do the same, and even acknowledge himself weary of this continuation of favors.

"I wonder," said he, "when Mrs. Higginbotham intends to be well? I hope she does not mean to play invalid here for the rest of her life. But my dear Ada," he added, with a twinge of conscience, "they really do belong to a most splendid family, old Governor Frettlebrewer."

But Mrs. Northwell had danced off; the governor's ghost had been so often raised to terrify her into a proper appreciation of his grandeur, that it had lost its effect and degenerated into a bore. She turned toward the sick-room.

"Henrietta," said the invalid, just as she entered, "Christmas week is very pleasant in the city, and these Northwells are rather good sort of people."

The entrance of their hostess prevented the damsel's reply; but Mrs. Northwell, who believed that a change even for the worse was agreeable, resolved instantly to import two little nephews, who were always taken with the scarlet fever, whooping-cough, or measles when out visiting—a cousin, who played on the piano all day, and sat up at night to practice new tunes—and a young married couple who never travelled without a baby, that appeared to think it had been sent into the world for the express purpose of screaming all the time. If this addition did not storm them forth, she would in despair apply the torch to the premises with her own hand.

The very next day, to her great surprise, these worthies all dropped in one after the other, without having been sent for at all. Mrs. Northwell, as usual, began to laugh—her husband looked rather blank—and the Higginbotham frigate showed signs of moving with all on board. In course of time they actually departed; and Mrs. Higginbotham's adieus were made as though she had conferred a great favor on the Northwells. So she had by leaving. Mary, the little handmaid, lingered in the hall; till the last expecting some acknowledgment of her services; and Mrs. Higginbotham, at length roused to a remembrance of her duty, turned toward her.

"Mary," said she, imposingly, "you are a very sweet girl, (how Mary trembled) and I hope, child, that, when you are old enough, you will get a good husband."

Mrs. Northwell suddenly forced her pocket-handkerchief into her mouth, and even her husband turned aside; while Mrs. Higginbotham sailed majestically on to the carriage, in the delightful consciousness of having acquitted herself to her own satisfaction.

Mrs. Northwell had felt almost as much burdened as though Mrs. Higginbotham's substantial proportions had rested on her; but she now went about with a light heart, in spite of the sick little boys, the musical young lady, and the screaming baby. These were only temporaries; but she had begun to fear that Mrs. Higginbotham might prove a permanency. All things have an end, and so did these troubles; the Christmas party passed off as delightfully as could be desired; and Mrs. Northwell had made an express stipulation with her husband that the name of Higginbotham should be a forbidden sound.

Some are born to greatness, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them; whether the Northwells had claims to the two former, the latter saying, at least, seemed verified in their case. In the spring Mrs. Northwell received a long letter from Mrs. Sanderson; which was, to her great surprise, dated "Old Wildfire," the family seat, and which began:

"Of course you will be delighted to hear of the happiness of our dear Henrietta, who is about to marry Arault Pepperworth. Henrietta's nature is pensive and interesting; while that of Mr. Pepperworth being more fitted to struggle with the world, they make an uncommonly well-matched couple. Mrs. Higginbotham has desired me to express the pleasure your presence, and that of Mr. Northwell, on the occasion, would give her; and she hopes that, on the receipt of this, you will immediately set out for Old Wildfire."

"What is the matter, Ada?" asked Mr. Northwell, a little impatiently; for it is provoking to see a person laughing immoderately, when you are entirely ignorant of the cause.

"*'Happiness of our dear Henrietta'*" Which happiness," she continued, "consists in her becoming the *fourth wife of her first love!* Oh! ye good women of old! there's patience, and constancy for you, and meek endurance!"

Mr. Northwell took the letter which she had dropped in her excitement; and after reading it he sat a few moments thinking.

"Ada," said he, rather hesitatingly, "what do you think of accepting this invitation?"

"Oh, I should like it of all things!" she exclaimed, her eyes fairly dancing. "We shall then see the whole menagerie at once!"

Her husband looked rather disconcerted; some fragments from the wreck of his family grandeur were still floating about in the ocean of his mind.

"Now," said his wife, laughing, "what is the use of trying to keep up this farce any longer? I belong now to the initiated—and my one peep behind the scenes has caused me, like Oliver Twist, to 'ask for more.' I want to see Uncle Kit Gildergrass."

Mr. Northwell pronounced her incorrigible; but she had been so often told this that she did not mind it in the least.

Well, one morning two travellers set forth on a journey; and after travelling "on, and on, and on," as the fairy tales say, they came at last to Old Wildfire; which they found as quiet-looking a place as could be imagined. The description of Mr. Pepperworth's character they found perfectly correct; he was indeed perpetually "struggling," and seemed ready to quarrel with any one whom he could draw into a dispute. His appearance scarcely warranted the strength and endurance of Henrietta's affection; but it quite spoilt the simile of comparing it to the ivy, since it had not clung around a ruin, for Mr. Pepperworth appeared to be in full possession of all his faculties. The preparations for eating were conducted on so extensive a scale that the Northwells wondered if an invasion of Goths or Vandals were expected.

Aunt Keziah Popperham entered; and Mr.

Northwell gazed with surprise on his father's first love—an immense woman, with a gigantic family of sons and daughters.

Cousin Peleg Ketcheram was a widower, engaged for the fifth time; and he was evidently considered quite a beau—for even widowers were scarce, and invariably engaged. As to a young man, such an article would have excited as much surprise as any of Barnum's curiosities. They all seemed to be born married.

Uncle Kit Gildergrass was a good-natured old man, who claimed relationship with everybody, and somewhat startled Mrs. Northwell by giving her a hearty kiss. This seemed to be a way he had; and all took it quietly. A bouncing school-girl deposited herself on his lap—"la! she was sure she didn't mind Uncle Gildergrass!"—staid spinsters received his salutes with a "nobody cared for Uncle Gildergrass!"—but Mrs. Northwell, toward whom he appeared irresistibly attracted by her youth and beauty, considered him a dangerous companion, and begged her husband to "keep her out of the clutches of that horrid old man!"

There was a young gentleman too—engaged of course; and looking so very sheepish, and conscious, that he reminded one forcibly of Bell in "The Inheritance," with her "a person in my situation." This was young Grubb Springbottom—his father was "old Grubb."

As each one in succession was mentioned, Mrs. Northwell would glance at her husband with a peculiar look, which had the effect of turning his eyes another way; but she whispered,

"This reminds me exactly of a very old novel

I once read, called 'Cherubina;' in which the heroine, a crazy, romantic individual, sets forth to discover the character she has read of, that are as familiar as household words. At a ball some one points out to her the characters in 'The Children of the Abbey,' and other books; when she finds 'Amanda' a great, stout woman, with the air of a grenadier—'Lady Euphrasia an old maid of fifty, and others to correspond."

Mr. Northwell looked rather disappointed himself; and began to view things in a different light. The ceremony was concluded; and Henrietta Higginbotham was converted into a Pepperworth. Uncle Gildergrass commenced with the bride, and kissed every one in the room—Mrs. Higginbotham not excepted; relatives flocked around to offer their congratulations; and one spinster faltered, "may you be happy!" with such visible agitation, that Mrs. Northwell concluded she must be a disappointed lover of Arault Pepperworth's. That too fascinating man bore off his interesting bride to the carriage that awaited them; and the guests departed.

Now that the Keziah Popperhams, the Kit Gildergrasses, and the Peleg Ketcherams had been stripped of their fancy trappings, and brought down to plain realities, Mr. Northwell felt that his family grandeur was like an oil painting—a picture that looked best at a distance. On his return, he manifested decided symptoms of indifference toward the framed parchment; and Mrs. Northwell one day found the hitherto-cherished relic in the garret, with its face ignominiously turned to the wall.

THE HEROINE OF THE BORDER.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

It was a lovely night in August, seventy years ago. The sky had not a cloud; the air was soft and balmy; and the moon, sailing silently on high, flooded wood and field and river with her calm, pure light. Never, since the last evening in Eden, had mother earth worn an aspect so like Paradise.

At the gate of a mansion, in the then newly settled town of Wheeling, stood two lovers about to part. The solemn spell of the hour, combined with the farewell they were about to take, had cast a sweet sadness over both.

"It is a long ride to Shepherd's Fort, and I almost fear for you," said a low and now timid voice, as the fair speaker looked up into the face of her companion. "Cannot you put off this departure, Francis?"

The bold Virginian gazed tenderly down at his beautiful companion, and then, as if instinctively drew her to him, imprinting a kiss on her forehead, as he answered,

"You were not always thus timid, Lizzy. I remember, before you went to Philadelphia, that you were the boldest girl of all the border: but, to-night, you are as fearful as a young doe. You have come back accomplished as a queen, but as nervous too. A fine lady," he continued, laughingly, "is not fit for a bride on the frontier."

"I am not naturally timid, as you know," earnestly replied his companion, blushing at this raillery, "but these terrible Indians appal me. You tell me that they have held a great council at Chillicothe and resolved to take up the hatchet again. What if a band of them should waylay you to-night?"

"Never fear it, dearest: they are far enough as yet. My information is in advance of them, and we shall probably not see them for weeks, even if at all. I thought it my duty to ride over and tell your father however: though," he added, archly, "perhaps there were other reasons which made me only too ready to find an excuse for visiting Colonel Zane."

"I suppose my fears are foolish," answered his companion, "but with woman, instinct, they say, sometimes takes the place of reason; and I feel as if some great danger surrounded us."

"It is the moonlight, Lizzy, nothing else," gaily replied the lover. "I always feel a touch of sadness myself, on an evening like this. Cheer up, dearest: these are idle fancies. I must,

however, make the most of this moonlight, or it will be dark before I reach the fort. God bless you," he added, as he kissed her again, adding bravely, "if peril should assail you, not ten thousand times ten thousand of those red-devils shall prevent Francis Duke flying to your aid."

In another moment he had leaped upon his horse, which stood hard by, and, with a parting waive of the hand, dashed off at a swinging trot. His betrothed watched him till he disappeared in the gloom of the forest: then, with a sigh, she re-entered her father's house.

The family was about retiring, and, reverently kissing her parents, the beautiful girl ascended to her chamber. But she could not sleep. An indefinable sense of danger pressed upon her spirits, and, throwing aside the curtain of her window, she sat down and gazed without. As she looked, a vision rose before her of her lover hurrying along the forest depths, while a savage ambuscade waited to receive him, and so vivid was the picture that she rose, with a start of terror, and could scarcely repress a cry. But, the next instant, the illusion faded, the serene moonlight calmed her soul, and she resumed her seat, ashamed of her idle terrors.

Thus hour after hour passed, her fancy continually conjuring up new perils for her lover, and her sober reason as constantly overcoming these visionary fears. Her sleeplessness still continued. At last the moon began to sink below the western forest. Slowly she watched the lengthening shadows as it disappeared, until the landscape was almost entirely shrouded in gloom; and then, with a last prayer for her lover's safety, she was about to retire from the window, when her attention was suddenly attracted toward what seemed a dark, moving mass on the edge of the neighboring woods.

What could it be? The cattle of the settlement were all carefully housed, she knew, and it was an hour at which no human being would be likely to be abroad. Her indefinable fears again returned. Her heart fluttered with a nameless dread. She concealed herself instinctively behind the window curtain, and watched this dark, moving object for several moments, until finally it emerged from the shadow of the forest, when its uncertain outlines resolved themselves into those of two Indians in their war-paint.

The curtain fell from her hands and she sank

into her chair, completely unnerved. All her late tremors were now explained. The hostile savages, instead of being far distant, were close at hand. The very warriors she had just seen might have intercepted her lover; and his scalp might be even now at the girdle of one of them. At this horrible idea she clasped her hands shudderingly over her eyes, and, for an instant, forgot her misery in oblivion.

But this lasted only for a moment. Lizzy Zane was not a weak, timid girl, whom danger rendered a burden to her friends: on the contrary hers was a soul cast in the heroic mould of Joan of Arc, and others of the brave and dauntless of her sex. Hastily springing to her feet, she cried. "This tremor is childish. What if Francis is dead, since peril surrounds my parents, and not only them, but the whole settlement. The Indians have waited till the moon was down to commence their attack, hoping to surprise us; and the two I have seen are doubtless outlying scouts, who, fortunately for us, have shown themselves too soon. I will rouse father at once. It will be time to weep for the dead, when my duty to the living has been fulfilled."

With these words she hurried from the chamber, though not till she had taken another guarded look from the casement. This time not a living soul was in sight. She rightly judged that the scouts had gone to bring up their companions, and lost no time consequently in arousing the household.

At that period in the history of the West, every frontier-man slept, as it were, on his arms. But the present summons was so unexpected, and the assault of the savages might be looked for so soon, that preparations for defence could not be made with the usual care. Col. Zane, on being aroused, despatched servants to summon his neighbors to the contiguous fort, which stood about forty rods from his own dwelling. About twenty men answered the call, bringing with them their families, but necessarily abandoning their stock and everything else to the chances of war. He determined himself to hold his mansion, it being favorably situated as an outpost and containing large stores of ammunition: accordingly retaining three men to assist him, he ordered the remainder of his people to repair to the fort. In vain did his daughter entreat to remain with him: he bade her remember that while duty made him stay, it would be criminal temerity for her to remain; and, deluged with tears, she obeyed his commands.

Scarcely had the gates of the fort been closed, less than half an hour had elapsed since the first alarm, when the army of savages appeared emerging from the forest. It was not long before they saw that their approach had been discovered

and that the fort was in readiness to receive them: so, with a yell of rage and hate, they rushed to the assault.

"Keep cool, my men," said the commandant of the fort, an uncle of our heroine, "and fire only when you can clearly make out an Indian. It is easy to confound the dusky devils with the shadows; and this they know; so take care and waste no ammunition. The women will load for you, when the hell-hounds come to close quarters and quick firing is necessary; fortunately we have plenty of muskets, so that fresh ones can be handed to you as fast as you require them. I will set you an example, and my niece, God bless her, will load for me, and show how an American woman can assist in the hour of peril."

His words were cut short by the necessity for instant exertion. The Indians had, by this time, crossed the field in front of the fort, and were approaching, partly under cover of trees, toward the entrance, hoping to force their way in. Instantly, from the house of Col. Zane, as well as from the fort, a heavy discharge of musketry was opened on the savage assailants. Every man, in each edifice, knew that he was fighting, not only for his own life, but for those dearer than life. Their wives, daughters and other female relatives, conscious of the same truth, heroically assisted them, loading the muskets as rapidly as they were discharged and praying silently for aid from heaven.

"Ha! they recoil," shouted the commandant, "the red-skins can't stand the fire of desperate men. The colonel is giving it to them gallantly from his house. Hark! that is his hurrah. Let us give him back a cheer. That was a true Virginian shout. God be praised, the devils run. Huzza for victory."

With exclamations like these the old soldier sustained the spirits of his men during that short, but terrible conflict, until, as his last words betokened, the assailants were in full flight: and then another shout went up from the fort, which was answered back as sturdily from the outpost, where, with his three assistants, Col. Zane kept his dwelling against the savages. It was worth peril unto death to hear and participate in that huzza.

But if the defenders of Wheeling flattered themselves that they had achieved a permanent triumph, they were soon destined to discover their mistake. The Indians, though repulsed, were not defeated, and, after a slight interval, were seen again rushing to the assault. Again, at the commandant's injunction, the men withheld their fire till the savages were close to the walls: again the muskets blazed in an almost continuous stream; again the women moulded bullets and loaded the still smoking guns; and

again the lion-like voice of the commandant rose over the sharp crack of the rifles, encouraging his subordinates, while the loud, joyous huzza of Col. Zane answered back from the outpost, as if he laughed at, and even rejoiced in the peril. Meantime, on the side of the assailants, the utmost fury prevailed. The loss of so many of their number had excited them to apparently demoniac madness, and their yells, always hideous, now sounded like those of fiends let loose on earth. Their dusky, painted forms, dimly seen by the red glare of the muskets, flitting hither and thither as they dodged from shelter to shelter in their approaches, added to this horrible illusion.

"Blaze away, my lads," shouted the commandant, "for they begin to waver, and another volley or two will send them to the right about. Ha! that red-devil had his death-shot from my brother's rifle: I know the crack of the old piece. That's a brave girl, Lizzy: you lead to perfection. Now for this cursed Wyandot that is climbing over the paling: I have my bead on him: there the rascal tumbles. And see, appalled by his fall, the rest are making off. Huzza, huzza, huzza."

It was as he said. Headed by a young chief, the Indians had suddenly broke from their coverts in front, and dashed, like a pack of hounds, fierce for blood, at the palisades. Their leader had reached this destination first, and leaping, as would a deer, had gained the top at a single bound, when the rifle of the commandant covering him, in an instant after he fell dead within the fence. His death was the sequel for his followers to retreat terror-struck, in all directions, an event which was again hailed by a shout from the fort, and an answering huzza from the outpost.

"There, we are safe for this night at least," said the commandant, bringing the breech of his rifle to the floor. "I never knew the red-skins to make two assaults before, in darkness; and the devil is in them, if they risk a third. But, at daybreak, look out. We shall have them on us again, at that hour, in all their force, and howling like ten thousand fiends incarnate. Such of you as would like to sleep can do so: it will be easy to awake you, if necessary."

But all were too anxious to sleep. From the loop-holes of the fort, eager eyes continually watched the distant wood, in which the savages had sheltered themselves, in order to detect the first movements of the foe. The prediction of the commandant, however, proved correct. No further assault was ventured that night. But an attempt was made to destroy, by stratagem, the house of Col. Zane, the fire of whose defenders had been, from its proximity, particularly

fatal to the Indians. For this purpose a savage crept up to it, with a lighted brand; but watchful eyes were on the foe in the outpost as well as in the fort; and, just as the Indian was about to apply the torch, a shot sent him limping and howling away.

During this cessation of the strife the thoughts of our heroine recurred again to her lover. But her uncle, who perhaps suspected her fears, cheered her by the assurance that he had escaped: "nay, look not so dull, Lizzy," he said, "now that the battle is over. Frank is safe, before this, at Shepherd's fort. His route lay in the opposite direction to that by which these devils clearly came. The peril for him will be to-morrow, when he attempts to join us, for, I know nothing of him, if he don't gallop to our aid, even if he does it alone."

The dawn was now approaching. With the first gleam of light, the savages were seen to be in motion; but they did not risk a close assault, as they had done in the night: they sheltered themselves at a distance, and opened a desultory fire on the fort and outpost, seeking to pick off the garrison one by one. The men, however, kept themselves carefully concealed, so that none were hurt; but, on several occasions, a savage, who had momentarily exposed himself, met his death.

An hour passed in this desultory warfare, when the commandant, looking forth, said,

"What can the red-skins be at now? Here, Lizzy, your young eyes are sharper than my old ones. Have they a wagon there?"

"It looks rather like a cannon, only that Indians never have such things. They are wrapping something around it: ah! now I see: it is a hollow log, and they have taken some chains from the shop, with which they are binding it. And there, too, are cannon balls."

"Now I understand it," said the commandant, laughing. "Jim Stokes, who found his way into the fort just before daybreak, had a load of cannon balls in his flat-boat, when the savages surprised him last night. The fools, I suppose, are about to fire them at us from their hollow log! Batter us down with wooden cannon! Ha, ha, ha. I fancy we shall first see some of the red-skins blown to kingdom-come."

The Indians had, by this time, finished their preparations, and, almost immediately after, the crowd opening from around their impromptu gun, a match was applied to it. As the commandant had foretold, the crazy weapon exploded, scattering death among the throng. The first effect was to paralyze the savages: the second was to rouse them to phrenzy. Breaking into yells of rage they burst from the spot, taking the direction of the fort, evidently determined to avenge the

death of their slain, even if they perished themselves.

"Now, my boys, comes the final struggle," said the commandant. "If we beat them back, this time, the victory will be complete: but if a single trigger fails, our scalps will be drying, before a month, in the Wyandot lodges. Think of your wives and children!"

He was already taking his station, when his niece silently touched his arm. Her face was full of perplexity and even terror; and, for the first time, since the siege began.

"What is it, my child?" quickly asked the commandant, his countenance assuming something of the look of hers, for he was aware that no common incident could have worked such a change in his niece. And he drew her to one side, saying, "speak in a whisper."

"The ammunition is out," was the reply, "unless there is more hid away than you gave into my charge."

A blank dismay settled on the commandant's countenance.

"Good God," he exclaimed, "it is all over with us, for we have no more in the fort. I brought what I thought enough, from your father's house, but these repeated assaults have consumed it."

"Cannot some one," said his niece, "go to our house, and bring back a supply?"

"But who? It would be almost certain death."

There was a moment's pause. Then, with no change in her countenance, except that it grew a shade paler, she answered,

"I will go."

"You!" said the veteran, starting back.

"And why not? I am young, active, and fleet of foot. I can go quicker than any one else. Besides, the savages, seeing it is only a woman, may not fire till they detect my purpose; and in that case only the return will be perilous. If I do not go, we are all sure to die. Even if mortally wounded, I think I can succeed in gaining the fort again, and if this can be done, and your lives saved, I am content to fall."

"But Frank——"

For a moment her lip quivered. She grasped her uncle's arm convulsively, gave him an appealing look, and said huskily,

"Don't—don't. But let me go before it is too late."

The tears came into the old man's eyes. He pressed his niece to his bosom, and said, "go, then, and God be with you, heroic girl! And yet," he added, glancing around, "if it were not for these poor women and children, neither I, nor any man here would suffer it."

When the intention of our heroine was made known, several of the men insisted on taking her place; but her reply was "not one of you can be

spared—a woman will be less missed." Sadly the little garrison beheld her depart on her terrible venture. Her uncle himself, notwithstanding the danger, attended her to the gate of the fort, which he himself threw open: and, with the fleetness of a young fawn, away she bounded.

The defenders of the outpost saw her departure, and though ignorant of its cause, stood ready to receive her, Col. Zane in person hurrying to the door. The savages, too, beheld her exit. At first a dozen guns were leveled at her, but when it was seen that the fugitive, as they thought her, was a woman, a contemptuous cry of "a squaw, a squaw," passed from one guttural throat to another, and she was suffered to gain the dwelling unharmed.

"What is the matter, my child?" cried her father, as she dashed into the doorway. "Why do you thus madly risk your life?"

"We are out of powder," breathlessly gasped our heroine. "All is lost unless I can carry back a supply. Give me some quick, or the Indians will have made their last rush." And, as she spoke, she sank, almost exhausted, on a chair by the door.

For an instant her father regarded her in silence. Wonder, tenderness and admiration succeeded each other in his heart, and were depicted in his face. The whole peril of her proceeding rose before him. Her return, he well knew, would be through a gauntlet of balls, which the savages, on detecting her purpose, would pour upon her. Escape with life would be almost impossible. She was his only daughter too; it would break his heart to lose her. But, though human weakness whispered all this, tempting him to keep her from returning, his sense of duty triumphed; and, with but a single moment's delay, he snatched a table cloth, which he himself fastened around her waist, while, in answer to his eager calls, one of his companions brought a keg of powder and poured it in. Then, snatching a hasty kiss, he threw open the door, and with a voice heroically calm, and a look like that of Abraham when about to sacrifice his only son, he cried: "run for your life and God help us both!"

Away she bounded again, this time fleetly than before, if that were possible. Her appearance was hailed by the savages with a storm of yells, for, with the craft of their race, they instantly divined her purpose. A score of rifles simultaneously were brought to shoulder. Some of the Indians, fearful she might escape, fired at once. The balls whistled close by, but she was unharmed. Others took time to aim, and the shots from these now began to sing past her: but still, as if protected by a miracle, she bounded on apparently unhurt. Her father stood watching her,

too absorbed to speak, but his heart beating like a forge-hammer. Nor was her uncle less dumb with emotion. Others, however, were not so breathlessly silent:

"See," cried one of the garrison, "that ball went through her apron: the powder pours out of the hole. She darts forward like an arrow. The shots rattle around her like hail, but she is still unhurt. Only a few rods remain. Heavens, she is struck. No, she only tripped a little: she is up again: the stumble has, perhaps, saved her life, for the rifle-balls went over her like wild pigeons on the wing. Huzza, she gains the gate, she is safe. Thank God, thank God." And the weather-beaten borderer burst into tears of mingled joy and excitement, in which the women loudly shared, as they rushed to welcome our heroine back.

Her uncle, who had hurried to the gate to meet her, now brought her forward. "Yes," he cried, "hang around her, embrace her, thank her, for she has saved all of our lives. There, that is enough: to your posts, all of you; for the yell I hear announces that the savages are renewing their assault. But ha! What is this?" he cried, as he taking up his post at his loop-hole, he looked out. "A horseman dashing toward the gate, and Frank Duke as I live. He cries to open to him. A shower of balls are falling around him. Run, Lizzy, and let him in."

He turned his head to address his niece, but she had already darted to the gate. Well was it that she had been so quick, for just as she flung open the portal a shot struck her lover, and he fell headlong from his steed. The savages were close behind, and, mad with so many failures, seemed bent on securing his scalp at every hazard; a dozen, indeed, were already within as many yards of the gate. The hesitation of a moment would have lost all. But, in that crisis, our heroine's presence of mind did not desert her: she rushed forward outside the gate, seized

Frank by the arm, and, with superhuman energy, dragged him staggering within the gate; then, letting him fall, hastily closed and barred the portals. As she placed the huge piece of wood across the solid doors she felt them quivering with the tomahawks hurled at her and Frank, in the last effort of baffled rage, but the thick planks were between her and the deadly weapons, and she knew the peril was past. She fell on her knees, at this conviction, beside the body of her lover, and audibly thanked God.

The fire from the fort and outpost, meantime, had been most deadly: the last rush of the savages had exposed them to great losses; and, almost simultaneously with the rescue of Frank, the assailants fell back. The siege, in fact, was now over, as the commandant had predicted it would be. But it was not till the third day that the savages finally broke up from before the fort, and returned across the Ohio.

Before that time Frank was out of danger. At first, his wound had been considered mortal; but assiduous care and a strong constitution saved his life. His return he explained as soon as speech was restored to him. He had fallen on the trail of the enemy, just before daybreak, and finding that it ran in the direction of Wheeling, had put spurs to his horse and galloped to the aid of the scanty garrison.

The sequel to our tale may be imagined. The heroine and her lover were, in due time, united. Never did the Old Dominion behold a nobler couple, though many have been her beauteous brides and numerous her gallant bridegrooms. And history, we may add, may be searched in vain for a deed of female heroism to surpass that which the siege of Wheeling witnessed.

NOTE.—The preceding story is true in its main particulars. The author has taken liberties with a few of the details, so as to mould them better to his purpose; but the heroic act of Elizabeth Zane, her character, and the general events of the siege are depicted without the slightest deviation from truth.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

BY MARY V. SPENCER.

"PATRICK—have they the letthers?—don't you persave I can't see?"

It was St. Valentine's morning, and the impatient speaker was one of two young Irish peasants, who were peeping into the Widow O'Neill's cottage: the Widow O'Neill, whose handsome daughters were the admiration of all Galway.

"Yes, and Mary is reading hers, rose of my heart," replied the other, who happened to have the best position for observation. "The saints bless her darlint face!"

"And Kate?" asked the other.

"Shure, and now it's Kate's turn," was the reply. "There—you can see her now, can't you—little do the swate girls think we are looking at them this blessed minute, as little as the mother that sits over the fire there, warming her ould hands."

"We'll be the happy lads, Patrick," said the other, "the day we take them to the praist."

"Amen to that," answered Patrick, "and may it be before another year comes around. Shure, and if we can't support the dear craythurs here, as the ould folks say we can't, we'll marry them and go to America, blessed be God!"

"That's the thrue word, if ever one was spoken," replied his companion. "But see—they have done reading—and if we don't be off, they'll see us—which would make them angry to be shure."

Such was one humble scene, on St. Valentine's morning; and hundreds of others, not essentially different from it, were doubtless to be witnessed elsewhere. On that day long-bashful lovers make bold to speak, and modest maidens do not disdain to give favorable answers: it is indeed high holiday in the court of love. Many a marriage dates from its auspicious dawn.

The festival of St. Valentine is of great antiquity. The Lupercalia, feasts of ancient Rome in honor of Pan and Juno, were held about this

period of the year; and among the ceremonies was a game in which young persons of the opposite sex chose each other jocularly by lot. The festival continued as a popular custom, even after the introduction of Christianity, only the patronage of Pan and Juno was laid aside, and in their place was substituted Saint Valentine. Throughout the middle ages, it was a prevalent notion that the first unmarried person of the other sex, whom one met on St. Valentine's morning walking abroad, was a destined husband or wife. A gentleman, indeed, was privileged to make such a one his Valentine for the ensuing year, and even to kiss his sweetheart: a custom commemorated in Sir Walter Scott's novel, "The Fair Maid of Perth."

Subsequently, the popular observance of St. Valentine's Day consisted in the drawing of a kind of lottery, followed by ceremonies not unlike an ordinary game of forfeits. A traveller, who visited England about 1700, thus describes the festival. "On the eve of St. Valentine's Day the young folk, by a very ancient custom, celebrate a little festival. An equal number of maidens and bachelors get together; each writes his or her true or feigned name upon separate billets, which they roll up, and draw by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets, and the men the maids; so that each of the young men lights upon a girl that he calls his Valentine, and each of the girls upon a young man whom she calls hers. By this means each has two Valentines; but the man sticks faster to the Valentine that is fallen to him, than to the Valentine to whom he has fallen. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the Valentines give balls and treats to their mistresses, wear their billets several days upon their bosoms or sleeves, and this little sport often ends in love."

In our day the festival of St. Valentine has ceased to be observed, in its true spirit, except

among some of the rural districts of England, Scotland or Ireland. But in remote spots, like that in which lived the Widow O'Neill, it is even yet kept up, or was, a few years ago, when the two lovers watched secretly, as we have described, at the window of their fair mistresses.

The hopeful prognostications of the young men were not at fault; the blushes of Kate and Mary had not deceived them; and, before a twelvemonth had expired, they were on their way to America, with their young brides, as they had wished to be.

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THE LOVE LETTER; OR, TREASON IN FLOWERS.

BY ANN S. STEPHENS.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 19.

"ARE no lessons ever taught in the Villa Reale?" retorted Maria, in a tone that betrayed no ordinary degree of annoyance.

She could not have put herself on the offensive more effectually. The blood rushed crimson over Ella's neck and bosom, and, without another word, she left the room, humming a tune as she went, and striving with all her might to appear unembarrassed.

Sunset came on, a glorious sunset, such as we have described the previous evening, followed by a full, clear moon. Ella went to the window of her room, and seating herself on the broad stone sill, looked down upon the busy throng that filled the promenade. English lords, Italian princes, Americans, flower-girls, music boys, street dancers, beggars, every phase and condition of life passed beneath her, as a river flows to the ocean. All this she looked upon as in a dream, one object alone filled her mind. If she gazed on the throng, it was from no interest, but to make herself sure that *he* should not pass when her eyes were turned another way.

Just as the sun went down, a cavalcade came sweeping around the Posilippo, and dashed into the Chiaja. It needed not the beat of drums, or the uplifted hats of the populace to inform Ella that it was the king coming from his hunt. She had no eyes for the royal carriage, with its common-place and stout burden of royalty; she saw nothing of the mounted body-guard that rode in close phalanx behind, and among all the gentlemen that formed a portion of the royal escort, she saw only one horseman. His eyes were uplifted to the window, flashing a look that made her breath come quick. His hand was raised, and, unseen by all but herself, waived a graceful adieu as the cavalcade swept around an abrupt curve in that portion of the drive, sending behind the clatter of hoofs, and the sharp rattle of the sentinels drums, caught and re-echoed from station to station as the king approached his palace. Maria had been stooping over her cousin, watching the cavalcade with feelings of which Ella had no conception. She too had caught a glance from one of the king's escort, a cautious glance, coupled with a smile that made the very

heart tremble in her bosom. He looked so confident—that strange, handsome Rossi—so assured of her love, yet so very cautious, his glance was withdrawn the moment it was given, but the smile continued. He neither looked back or waived his hand, still they understood each other; and after the first instant Maria grew pale, and an inward shudder crept through her bosom, like the movement of a viper. She grew faint and leaned against the window-frame, sick of her very life.

Ella sprang up, wild with the happiness that one look had sent to her heart, throwing her arms about the drooping neck of her cousin, she began to whirl around the room in a waltz.

"It is hard work without music," said Maria, with a forced smile, but yielding to the graceful impetus.

Music indeed. What need had Ella White of that? Had she not enough in her own heart, swelling there in blissful waves as we fancy the air of heaven, to palpitate when the angels pour their full melody upon it?

You should have seen the golden gleam of her curls as they swept over that white neck—the child-like sparkle of her eyes as she floated through the room, throwing off the sweet exuberance of her feelings in a thousand graceful deviations from the regular step.

She danced herself out of breath, and then releasing her cousin, looked playfully in her face.

"Why, how pale you are—how terribly forlorn. Was he absent? I did not look. Were you disappointed? Oh, that was too bad."

"Who absent? What are you talking about?" answered Maria, pettishly, for everything annoyed her just then.

"My pretty marchioness, who should it be, pray, but Rossi."

"What is Rossi to me?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing in the world, I dare say—when people are nothing to us we write them love-letters, and all that sort of thing?" As she spoke, her hand stole down, and Ella snatched a letter from the pocket of Maria's apron. The rapid motion of the waltz had exposed the address to her quick eye. She held it up, laughing with gleeful mischief.

For a moment the young girl stood before her laughing cousin mute, motionless, and shivering as if chilled to the soul. Then with a burst of passion that left her white as death, and shook her whole frame, she darted toward the letter.

"Give it me—give it me at once. It is mine. You have no business with my letters!"

"Not till you tell me all about it. When did he propose? Is this the answer? In a word, am I, poor, humble I, to have a marchioness for my cousin? Speak, cousin, speak, or I shall faint."

She looked like fainting, that wild, beautiful creature, with her bright eyes so full of fun, her dimples, her floating hair, and one arm holding up the letter, white as snow, and with the profuse lace on her muslin sleeve floating around it like a gossamer.

"No, no, cousin, mine, you *cannot* have the love-letter till I am taken into confidence."

"What do you wish to know?" said Maria, now frozen, as it were, into pale composure, and speaking with bitterness.

"Oh! only one thing—one little tiny fact, cousin. Is he accepted?"

"If I tell, will you give me back the letter?"

"Certainly! but what a thick, heavy sort of a love-letter it is, six sheets of note paper, I dare say. Well, now, is he accepted?"

"Yes, he is accepted conditionally: will that do?"

"Do! why you dear, enchanting, beautiful cousin, it will be the ruin of me; poor mamma will be beside herself; a marchioness in the family, a wedding—court-dresses. What will poor, insignificant me pass for then?"

The wild young thing had talked herself out of breath. She paused, looked earnestly at her cousin, and the sparkling violet of her eyes grew dim with tears.

"You know, Maria, how glad I am—how much, how very much I love you. Here is the letter, but tell me, why is it so heavy? How could you find so much to write?"

Again Maria's face blanched, and her eyes fell beneath the pure loving gaze that was fixed upon them.

"I had much to explain," she faltered out; "my position, my poverty—he knew nothing of circumstances so painful to write, and which may change his wishes."

"No, cousin, this must not be," said Ella, now speaking with serious dignity, "say nothing of all this; you are not poor, no one ever expected that you would be. While with us—one of the family—it was of no importance; but now, let us understand each other. Our fathers were brothers, one died rich, the other insolvent; the poor man left a daughter, the rich brother left

one also, with money enough for both. I always expected to share this property with you, Maria. How should you have doubted it?"

Maria stood listening, her eyes still bent on the floor, and tears raining down her pale cheeks; her figure appeared to grow shorter; she seemed crushed to the earth by the noble conduct of her cousin.

"Oh, heavens! I never expected this," she cried, locking her hands together.

"Go break the seal, and strike out all that you have said on this subject in your letter," said Ella, passing an arm around her cousin's neck, and kissing her; "fill up the space with all sorts of delightful nonsense, or else it will be no genuine love-letter after all."

Maria gave no answer, but went out still weeping, and with the letter grasped tight in her hand.

She went to her chamber, and stole through into that of her cousin. As she entered, that thief-like air came upon her again; she crept to the toilet and attempted to open the tortoise-shell casket. It was locked. Maria drew back with a faint groan, she remembered that the key was suspended to Ella's watch. How could she obey the repentant impulse?—how redeem the fraud she had perpetrated on that noble girl? Maria thrust the letter into her apron pocket again, and sat down the most miserable creature that you ever saw. How could she proceed?—how redeem her pledge to Rossi, without wrong to that sweet generous cousin who had just divided all she had on earth with her? Reflection gave her no help, and she wrung her hands in agony of spirit. The good and the evil in her nature had a severe struggle that night, and the good prevailed. But the first step in evil sometimes counts terribly upon the future; God does not always yield the power to redeem a wrong even to the pleadings of our penitence.

While Maria sat wrapped in the bitterness of her thoughts, the door opened and Ella looked in. All her beautiful, wild spirits had returned; consciousness that she was loved, the sweet feelings sure to follow a generous action, the impulsive gaiety of her nature, all were kindling innocent and joyous mirth in her bosom; and an angel looking in upon some troubled spirit of darkness, could not have been in more beautiful contrast than she appeared that moment with the gloomy inmate of the chamber.

"What, sitting here in the dark, sweet marchioness," she cried. "Have you any idea how late it is? Why, the moon is up, and pouring floods of silver on the bay."

"I will come presently, but leave me just now," said Maria, sadly, and the kind girl went away, leaving the gloomy thinker to her self-reproach.

Again the door was opened, and with the gush of light that broke over the Guido-like beauty of that young head, came a strain of exhilarating music. Maria sprang to her feet, exclaiming breathlessly, "what, so late! Can it be so late?"

"I thought that would bring you out," cried Ella, with a blithe laugh. "Come—come! he is under the window, I saw his face in the moonlight. Now is the time, throw him the letter, with a handful of flowers; here is a basket full, which John has just brought in."

Again that unaccountable tremor seized upon Maria, her face flushed red, and she moved forward as a bird moves when the serpent is charming it, wildly, and like one impelled by a stronger will than its own. As if fascinated by the sweet sounds that came up through the window, she seated herself on a corner of the broad sill.

A voice was now added to the guitar, deep and rich, but it seemed only to increase the agitation which had seized upon the poor girl.

Ella saw nothing of this in the wild glee of her spirits; she ran from the casement to a table loaded with flowers that stood near, sorting out from the fragrant mass the choice blossoms that had a love language mingled with their fragrance. Moss rose-buds, heliotrope, violets, pansies, crimson tea roses, mignonette, forget-me-nots were huddled into a little basket, which she carried to the window.

"Now, cousin, now, here they are bright as a rainbow, and trembling all over with dew. Throw him down a whole handful for that one song."

Maria shrank back, rejecting the flowers with her hand.

"What nonsense—how coquettish, capricious, nay, cruel you are," cried Ella, seating herself in the window; "hear, he pauses, he is waiting for a recognition. What are you thinking of, cousin?"

"Is he going?—is he gone?" asked Maria, anxiously, as the music was hushed for a moment.

"Gone; no, he is looking up so piteously, waiting for the answer to his letter. Do, Maria, throw it down with a whole torrent of flowers."

"I cannot; you are mad to ask it, Ella White."

"Nonsense, this is all coquetry; give it to me then, he will never know which of us threw it."

Darting her little hand into Maria's apron pocket as she spoke, the reckless girl seized upon the letter, and snatching a handful of flowers from the basket, held them out of the window, laughing till her slight frame shook as she performed the mischievous act.

"No—no, Ella White, I beg, I entreat, I command you give back that letter," cried Maria, seizing her about the waist with both arms, and speaking in a husky, rapid voice.

It was too late. The moment Ella felt herself seized, and before the words were spoken, her fingers had loosed their light hold on her prize, both paper and flowers had fluttered down to the Italian's feet. But the merry laugh, mellowed with an effort to suppress it that accompanied the action, died upon her lip as she felt the force and husky terror in Maria's words. That instant too the music ceased from below, surrounding her with chill silence.

"What have I done?—oh! Maria, tell me what have I done?"

She received no answer. The arms that held her so firmly a moment before gave way, and her cousin fell prone and helpless on the carpet.

In the royal palace at Naples are a series of rooms, constructed and ornamented after the most sumptuous apartments excavated in Pompeii. The same rich stucco forms the walls, the same designs in fresco are upon the walls and ceiling, and with scarcely a brighter tint than may still be seen on the broken walls of the dead city—tints upon which time seems to have no power; birds, flowers, subjects from a mythology, rich in all that excites the imagination, glow upon the walls of that royal palace as they did centuries ago in the ill-fated dwellings of the buried city. Rich mosaics gem the floors, and with few exceptions the furniture and adornments of these rooms bare the same shadow of antiquity.

One of these rooms, an apartment of moderate size, serves the present king of Naples as a cabinet, and thus surrounded by the pomp and strange luxury known to departed ages, when tyranny seemed a portion of the times, does that monarch, praised by the few, and execrated by the many, forge chains that grind his nation to the dust.

On the night, and within the very hour when Ella White bent pale with dismay over her fainting cousin in the Hotel Victoria, the Marquis Rossi penetrated the guards that swarm the royal palaces of Naples, and entered this singular cabinet.

A man was sitting there alone, short, exceedingly stout, and with a dull, stolid expression of countenance, that would have repulsed you but for the smile that now and then broke its heaviness. It was to guard this man from his own subjects, for he had no other enemy to fear, that the corridors and courts without were thronged with armed men, the click of their guns, the tramp of their iron-shod heels, the sharp roll of the drum, these were the home music which greeted the king of Naples wherever he turned in that noble palace.

It was a fine commentary upon his life and character. Not even to worship God before the high altars his power had erected, dare the

sovereign of that beautiful country go forth without a triple guard of his hireling soldiers.

A door opened, there came the sound of stealthy footsteps gliding along the mosaic floors of a distant room, and then, with a gentle, cringing bow, Rossi entered the cabinet.

The king smiled; that smile was the redeeming point of his features, there was something bland, nay, almost cordial in it, that, while it lasted, awoke some interest in the man. His manner too was gentle, and without a single touch of arrogance—Nero had pleasant manners.

The king reached forth his plump white hand, and Rossi bowed over it with cringing reverence.

"You have brought me farther proofs, I trust, something distinct and positive, Rossi. I am weary of these constant whispers; one would think the very children that climb my knee wore poinards in their little bosoms wherewith to stab their king!"

The king spoke moodily, and Rossi felt that his favor depended on the letter that lay in his bosom. He drew forth the paper which Ella White had so recklessly placed in his possession that night, and, bending one knee, placed it in the king's hand.

"It has scarcely been in my possession an hour," he said; "and even now I am but imperfectly acquainted with the contents, but it is the handwriting of Mazzini."

The brow of the king lowered at the name, and a look of fierce, almost brutal ferocity darkened his whole face.

He tore opened the package, scented as it was by the flowers that had been crushed with it in Rossi's haste, and read eagerly. His leaden eyes began to fill with that dim, ferocious glow which renders an eye habitually dull so repulsive; his figure began to swell, as it were, with the venom of his thought, and motioning for Rossi to stoop, he addressed him in a hoarse whisper, "where is he now?"

"At this moment I cannot tell, but he will not go to rest without passing the Victoria; he is fascinated by this little American, and haunts her with serenades. I was compelled to go early on my own little expedition from fear of encountering him!"

The monarch listened, and his heavy lip stirred with a smile that had no power to light up the rest of his face.

"Call a guard," he said, taking a pen from the Malachite standish before him, and writing furiously—"call a guard."

Rossi went out and returned, followed by a soldier.

"There are your orders," said the king, folding the paper, on which he had written, with a

degree of eagerness that blotted it over with the moist ink, "obey them at once!"

The man bowed low, and went out silently as he had entered.

That night a gush of music aroused Ella, white as she lay half asleep beneath the lace drapery of her little French bed. She arose upon her elbow and listened. Once more the rich sound swelled to its most melodious volume—broke, as it were, into a shriek, and all was still. The broken music was followed by a faint exclamation from Ella's bed, and starting up she stole to her cousin's room.

"Are you awake, cousin?"

"What is the matter?—what troubles you?" said Maria, shrinking back into the bed, as Ella knelt down, resting her cheek against the pillow. "What brings you here, Ella White?"

"I don't know," answered Ella, with child-like mournfulness; "oh, have patience with me, for it seems as if my heart were breaking!"

Poor Ella White! she little dreamed how long a woman's heart may be in the breaking.

It would have touched you to the soul—the change that fell upon those two young girls after these events. They still lingered in Naples, for Ella was obstinate, and would not be removed from the spot where she had last seen Marini. His disappearance was mysteriously connected, she felt, with the loss of her papers from the little casket, but how connected she could not fathom. Generous, honorable herself, how could she suspect the treachery of her bosom friend.

At last excitement and strength died together in the bosom of poor Ella. The bloom faded from her cheeks, a strange, mournful lassitude followed. Her beautiful person became the grave of a dead hope, which chilled the very life within her veins with its dull, leaden weight.

An English physician was called. He looked in her face with a kindly, but searching glance, murmured to himself that medicine would do no good there, and went away.

Two months after this, Mrs. White left Naples. Ella now had a restless wish to depart. "The walls of San Elmo," she said, "chilled her to death with their grim shadows." Her soul had exhausted itself in striving to penetrate the mysteries buried so deeply beneath them. Sometimes in the night it seemed to her as if she could hear cries and the clank of fetters, always from that direction. This she knew well enough was all fancy, but it was killing her nevertheless.

Maria was also anxious to depart. She did not pine like Ella, but a keen feeling of mortification and anger sharpened her temper, and kindled up a host of bitter memories that made Naples hateful. She could not endure the calm, soft smile with which Rossi passed her in the promenade or

drive. She read triumph, sarcasm in it. His deferential bow and bared forehead smote her with its cool mockery. The traitor had attained his object, his treason was accomplished. Maria writhed under the certainty that she had been sought and used as the tool of a Neapolitan spy—used to the ruin of her best friend, and then cast off without a word—was it strange that she was anxious for new scenes?

They went to Rome, Florence and then home, to dear, glorious America, how doubly dear—how more than glorious to those who have trod on foreign soil. But the spirit Ella had evoked followed her even there. To the weary-hearted there is no home but that beyond the grave. Ella grew no better. The chill—the fever—the night of wild unrest followed her, now more fiercely, like a wild animal that had grown hungry with waiting.

Two years passed, and a deep, earnest longing seized upon the poor girl to see Naples again. All that she had of life centred in that one wish.

She did see Naples, in the early spring time, when the Campania was one vast bower of vines, when every thicket was vivid with blossoms, and the scent of orange groves swept even through the dark, narrow streets, and cave-like houses where the poor live. In this beautiful season Ella came back to her old haunts—no, not to her old haunts! It was not in the Chiaja or through the royal grounds that she rode now; and, if she had sought those places, no one of her old admirers would have recognized the bright sparkling beauty of two years since in the pale, languid, large-eyed young creature, that lay so shadow-like among the cushions of her mother's carriage.

No, strange as it may seem, and unfit for a delicate creature like her, Ella would always drive somewhere into the drear, poverty-stricken thoroughfares of the ancient city.

Houses, dark as dungeons, and so damp that a wild animal would have crept from them with loathing—streets to which the sun never penetrated even at the hottest noon. These were the places sought after by that fair girl. No wonder the inhabitants looked after her with admiration and awe, as if an angel had in some sweet errands of mercy lost itself in that dreary neighborhood.

One day she was driving along a dim, narrow street, almost shut out from daylight by tall houses, piled six and seven stories above their foundations—houses that left nothing but a narrow strip of the sky visible from the wet pavements—there was a slight obstruction that checked the horses just at the mouth of a still narrower and more squalid alley. Ella had been a good deal excited, she always was when penetrating these drear haunts. Now she started up

from her cushions with a wild, eager look, and leaning forward, bent her great, earnest eyes down the alley. Her pale lips were parted, and a faint color crept suddenly over them. In health it would have been crimson, now, poor child, it was a faint purplish blue. The clank of iron, unheeded by all except herself, for who else listened for it as she did—had sent all that wild animation to her face.

A gang of galley slaves were coming up the dark passage, tramping heavily through the mud, which muffled the horrid rattle of their fetters against the stones, Ella's wild eyes roved from one face to another. Some stooped downward, for they dragged huge burdens that bent them double. Others walked painfully on, jerked now and then almost to the earth by the stagger of some companion, who formed a cruel link in this human chain. One slender figure, stooping like the rest, but not from any burden save the terrible weight of his own misery, came staggering forward as if too feeble for the endurance of his chains.

I do not know what it was that smote upon Ella's heart as she saw this man. Certain it is she did not recognize him at first—how could she, so pale, so haggard, and in that squalid felon's dress? But all at once the strength of her body came back, the vigor of twenty lives seemed waking up that delicate frame. She opened the carriage door and stepped out unaided, the first time in months.

With a rapid step she entered the mouth of that dark alley, holding out her arms, and with a look—I cannot describe that look! All the great beauty of a woman's soul was in it, and you felt that death was rendering it holy.

The convict lifted his haggard eyes, and his frame began to shake till the chain that linked him to that mass of human suffering quivered from link to link. The convict's dress swelled to the heaving of his chest, and with a cry he made an effort to spring forward.

A sharp check of the fetters held him back, but she was in his arms, her pure white robes floated around his squalid dress—her soft clasp—her holy tears—her sweet, solemn words of love. No prison garments, nay, chains, could keep them from his heart.

He began to weep. Great tears rushed, one after another, down his thin cheek. He bent down his head and spoke to her; it seemed to him that she smiled. He felt a tremor in her pale arms, and their soft clasp grew more clinging.

Even the leader of the gang was touched. He forebore to give any orders that should break up the affecting interview.

Marini looked up, his face had changed. There

was life, energy in it. The king of Naples had not quite crushed out all manhood from his nature with those infamous shackles.

"Look on," said the convict, and he smiled for the first time in two years—"look on, and tell your master, the king, that his galley slaves can taste joy spite of his irons!"

"Joy—joy!"

Did she speak, or was it an angel uttered the words? He looked down. Her arms had relaxed a little in their soft clasp, she was smiling—the pale lids were dropping like white rose-leaves over her eyes—surely it was a strange place for slumber, yet how still she lay on the convict's bosom!

Three nights after, the earth was torn up from a beautiful little hollow in the Compo Sante at Naples. A thicket of white roses was shaken at the root, and many a gentle flower lay crushed beneath the rude plunge of that workman's spade; but in that climate the path to heaven is often broken through a portal of flowers, and crush them as you will, there is no lack of God's sweetest language to those who sleep in Italian graves. A fair young girl from America was laid to sleep in this beautiful hollow, and no one could

see that a blossom was wanting. True, the white roses shed their leaves suddenly and fast, sheeting the new grave as if with a fall of snow-flakes, but no one cared that the workman's spade had bruised the roots; one sweet deluge of the fragrant leaves, and the thicket blossomed on as if nothing had disturbed it.

It was not long after, perhaps a week, perhaps more, no person took heed about it. But one night a convict was cast into one of the three hundred and sixty-five pits that yawn—a single one each day—for the vicious, the unfortunate, and the poor of Naples. Who it was no one asked, and possibly no one cared; others were plunged into the pit before morning, but that pale, beautiful face as it lay upward on the stone flags, with the moonbeams touching it so softly, that face even the sexton remembered full an hour after.

At daylight quick lime was poured into the vault, bushel after bushel, then the great granite slab was sealed up, to be opened again that day year; and the moon poured its light softly upon it as if another soul had not gone through that horrid gate, to demand justice before high heaven upon the King of Naples.

THE PAWNED WATCH.

BY IRA B. NORTHROP.

"LET us hope for the best, Annette. A reformation may yet take place. You know what Charles promised us last evening."

"Oh, indeed, I know what he promised, and it is upon such promises that I have lived for the past three years. Hope alone has sustained me through many a severe trial; through many a sleepless night and painful day. Hope, oh, blissful hope, thou art my only solace. But I fear I shall die hoping for that which I have long and ardently sought to produce, a thorough reformation in the character of my lost, though idolized husband."

"But you know what he promised us last evening, you know his firm resolve."

"Oh, I know it well, dear sister, but it was not his first promise; time and time again he has said that he would forsake his ruinous haunts, and abandon his evil associates; but they have as frequently been broken. The influence which I once possessed over him was often exercised, and with a beneficial result, but now, alas! dear sister, that influence is nearly gone, and with it my hope is fast waning."

"As I sit here in my lonely room, how can I keep my thoughts from wandering back to those days, when you and I sat looking out of our chamber window, watching the merry laborers, and listening to the sweet warbling notes of our pet robins; to those months and years which passed away and left us basking amid the pleasures of our own youthful home; to those days when you and I, with hearts buoyant with hope, talked over and over again our future prospects; to those days—happy days—when we sat at the old north window watching for Charles. I can imagine the old rocking-chair there now waiting to receive me—and how my heart throbbed when I saw him approaching over the old north hill. Oh! those castles in the air, they were quickly constructed, and they have too, too quickly been destroyed. Days dark, dark and dreary seem to await me. It was joy that caused my heart to throb then, now it is fear; kind words greeted my ear then, now it is the inebriate's curses; we lived for each other then, and in each other's society our happiest hours were spent. Oh, the old parlor, the very thoughts of which have often caused a tear to fall, silent tears they are, for no kind and affectionate Charles is by my side."

The bar-room has now become his parlor, and amid a clan of evil associates his hours are being spent."

"Be of good cheer, dear sister, you know the object of my mission. We should always nerve ourselves to meet the many adversities which line our devious ways in life; we should ever prove true in every situation which Providence may call us to fill. The clouds which now veil from your sight those happy days, upon which we were wont to comment, may ere long pass away, and you may soon behold that reformation for which you have so long and so faithfully toiled."

"Oh," replied the wife, "could I, by some Herculean effort, banish from his sight his evil associates, I know that I could then have an influence over him; but now, alas! my influence is nearly gone, and with it my hope is fast waning; but my love and my prayers for him never shall abate."

"He will return sober to-night, dear sister, for he promised us he would; and then with a wife's tender love, and a sister's pure affection, we will endeavor to win him from his evil associates. But hark! he is coming."

Charles Camdon's father was one of the most noted men in the town, and his family the most influential. Yet better would it have been for Annette Fenno had her lover occupied a different sphere in life, for like most rich men's sons, he relied more upon his father's reputation and wealth to sustain him in life, than upon any real merit that he possessed himself.

As may be imagined, many an anxious daughter, in hopes to win Charles Camdon, had assumed those winning airs, and bestowed those bewitching smiles which seldom fail. But none proved successful. The retiring modesty of Annette Fenno at last won the prize for which so many had tried, but tried in vain.

Annette Fenno was indeed a beautiful girl, possessing all those many accomplishments which adorn and dignify the true woman. She mingled but little in society, or with the world, preferring rather the sweet society of her sister, together with that of a choice collection of books. She felt proud of the dazzling reputation of Charles Camdon, and when he deigned to pay his attention to her, she endeavored to please him with

her mind instead of by coquettish airs, preferring rather to captivate him with inward thought than outward dress, and in this she was successful; for Charles Camdon had seen enough of society to know that true worth does not consist in outward show, but in inward feeling, not in that which clothes the body, but in that which clothes the soul, not in those charms which are contained in a well-filled purse, but in those charms which are contained in a well-stored mind.

The first three years of Charles Camdon's married life were spent amid the scenes of his childhood, surrounded by his fond and affectionate wife and his indulgent father. But changes—such as we are all subject to in this life—soon became his lot. His father had engaged in speculations which proved to be of the most unsuccessful character, and for the first time Charles Camdon began to look around for business, and to call to his aid the little useful talent which he possessed. His father was no longer able to support him, and he was at last obliged to leave the parental roof, under which he had enjoyed so many happy days, and so many earthly blessings.

Oh! cold, dreary misfortune, how many bright hearts have been darkened by thy presence, and how many hopes—bright and cheerful—have vanished at thy approach. Care and sorrow are thy only followers, and tears thy only companion. A touch from thy hand—no matter how gentle—is keenly felt, and our loftiest aims are often humbled by thy subduing power.

Being entirely unfit for any kind of business which required constant attention or mental ability, Charles Camdon wandered from one place to another, in quest of something by which he could maintain himself and her to whom he had vowed to "support, protect and defend;" but at last, finding his efforts fruitless, he returned to his native home, to share the genial smiles of his kind and affectionate wife.

A situation was at last offered him, which, though menial in its tendency, he accepted in hopes that something of a different nature could soon be procured. With sad and gloomy feelings did he see his old associates one by one desert him in consequence, and in order to revive his wounded feelings the intoxicating cup was weakly sought.

It was a long time before his constant wife would believe that her husband, with whom she had enjoyed so many happy hours—had begun to resort to the bar-room for his companions; but soon the woeful truth became too apparent for her to longer doubt its truth; and it was then that she called to her aid those true and heroic principles by which she had always been governed. The more degraded her husband

became, the more constant her love, and the stronger her affections for him. The tones of the midnight bell often filled her mind with feelings dark and dreary, as she sat alone waiting for her husband's return. It was at such times that her thoughts wandered back to those days when she sat at the old north window, anxiously watching for some demonstration which would tell her that Charles was again coming to tell her of his constant love, of his undying affection; it was at such times that her feeble voice was raised in prayer to God for her husband's reformation. She had talked with him, she had plead with him, she had pointed out to him what he must soon, soon become if he continued in his present course, but as yet her entreaties had been of no avail.

The sister of Annette Fenno, though young and inexperienced, was not unmindful of the great change which had taken place in her brother-in-law, for the marks of that demon, whose power is sufficient to destroy the character, the reputation, the life, and the soul of all those over whom it obtains a mastery, are sufficiently audible for the most inexperienced youth to detect.

Having so often sat upon his knee and listened to the loud tickings of his watch in those courtship days—pleasant days—when he paid his regular visits to her sister, and having imbibed some of those tender feelings which in those days are so manifest, it is not to be wondered at that she should still retain a strong love for him, not only for the relationship which he now bore to her, but for the friendship which existed between them in former days.

Possessing a strong belief that her influence would greatly assist toward bringing about that reformation, for which her sister had so long and so ardently sought, she resolved to spend a few days with her, in hopes that their united efforts would bring about the desired change.

It was some time before an opportunity was offered. Three days had passed away since the sister's arrival, during which time Charles had been in that state which totally unfitted him for any reflection, or to receive any admonition, however gentle.

The third night, however, he returned at an earlier hour than he had done for a long time; and it was with delight, almost beyond endurance, that his wife heard his regular tread, and for the first time in almost two years, received from his lips the gentle word "Annette." The old family rocking-chair was immediately tendered him, and a cheering supper was soon in waiting; everything was done which would tend to make home attractive, the past was forgotten, and both wife and sister endeavored to banish from his mind all thoughts regarding his real

condition, knowing too well that an allusion to the past, or a true picture of the present, would bring about those sad and gloomy feelings which nothing but the glass would banish.

While seated at the table, Charles Camdon began to think that he was indeed a man, that he was not a lost and despised being, the tender voice of his wife told him so, and the cheering words of his little Susy (as he was wont to call her) strengthened him in that belief.

Long and ardently did they labor with the inebriate husband, and kindly and affectionately did they administer to him every comfort which was in their power to bestow. At last, unable longer to withstand those feelings which every word seemed to arouse, Charles Camdon arose and taking the hand of his affectionate wife, declared "that henceforward he would be the man which they had represented him to be, but which he was far from being." And continued he, "the same watch, the tickings of which in former days so delighted little Susy, shall again delight her with its ceaseless throbbing. The watch was pawned, some months ago, for money to buy liquor with, but never again shall a drop enter my throat. To-morrow the time expires for which it was pawned, and it must, it shall be redeemed. I have not forgotten those happy days, when I longed for the hand to point to the hour when I knew you would expect me, and the thoughts of its being sold was the cause of my early arrival home this evening. To-morrow I must obtain the watch."

It was a late hour before the trio separated. The wife and sister were over delighted with what they had heard, the noble resolutions which had been formed, and the prospect of their being adhered to.

At an early hour Charles Camdon arose, but not in as good humor as when he retired. Having refrained from partaking of his usual beverage before retiring, his nerves were all unstrung, his hand trembled.

Buoyed up with an ardent desire to obtain the watch, Charles Camdon wandered from one friend to another, seeking from each a small amount, which in the aggregate would enable him to

obtain the desired treasure. Had the friend to whom he made the first application turned him away, with that insulting language which the inebriate too often receives when appealing for money, his noble resolution would no doubt have been weakened; but instead of receiving from that friend words implying no confidence—no money, he received words of congratulation, which told plainly that an inebriate when sober always has friends.

Although Charles Camdon met with more friends than he supposed he had, yet it was a long time before the required amount was raised, for as Burns says—

"A man may take a neebor's part,
Yet hae na cash to spare him."

And so he found it! Kind words were indeed lavished upon him, and it was those kind words that sustained him—it was kind words that strengthened him—it was the kind words which he had received during the previous evening that kept him from his morning dram. Oh! what will not kind words do.

It was late before the watch was obtained, but as soon as obtained, a quick step could have been heard hastening toward the residence of Charles Camdon. The hopes of his faithful wife had begun to weaken, but little Susy remained firm in the belief that he would return sober, and with the treasure, to obtain which he had taken his sudden departure.

No sooner was his steps heard than the door was thrown open, and as he entered the tears of his constant wife began to flow, not with anguish, not with sorrow, but with joy, fervent tears of joy.

Only two years have passed away, dear reader, but what a change has been wrought in that family during those two years. The happy wife and husband can now be seen seated around their own quiet fireside. There is no inebriate there now to darken, by his hideous person, the future prospect of his loving wife—there are no words, rendered half audible by liquor, spoken now. All is quiet, save the busy needle of the faithful wife, or the constant ticking of the once PAWNED WATCH.

'TACT vs. BEAUTY.

BY SYDNEY C. POYNTZ.

ONE bleak, cold evening in October, I found myself the only passenger in the stage-coach which was rapidly approaching the little village of Stelton. Some weeks before, I had received a letter from Mrs. Somers, an early friend of mine, urging me to visit her. It was just after my brother Robert's death. I felt unsettled and nervous, and not having decided what course with regard to my future residence to adopt, resolved to accept for the present the invitation so kindly given. Although we had not met for many years, I remembered well the warm, affectionate heart of my friend, and felt certain of a sincere and cordial welcome from her. Knowing, however, the prejudice with which old maids are regarded by gay, fashionable young ladies, such as I knew her daughters to be, I could not help feeling a little uneasy as we passed through the streets of the village, and I twitched my collar and arranged my veil rather nervously. Of the pecuniary circumstances of my friend I knew nothing, except that her husband had been considered, when living, to be a successful business man. I felt, therefore, a little surprise when the horses, slackening their pace, turned into a long and imposing avenue of forest trees, at the end of which a large and stately mansion loomed up dimly in the darkening twilight. I gazed out eagerly at the brilliantly lighted hall, at the door of which several figures were standing awaiting my arrival. Every one, I believe, feels anxious at drawing near the end of a journey. Never had I experienced this more than now. What had I, a desolate mourner, a plain, homely old maid, to do in the abode of wealth and gayety? How I wished myself back in my little chamber at home, and regretted that I had been so hasty in accepting the invitation!

But it was too late now. The coach drew up at the steps, the guard flung open the door, and confused by the sudden flashing of lights in my eyes, I alighted and was caught in my friend's arms, while a kind, earnest voice poured forth such a flood of heartfelt welcomes, that all my fears were dispelled in a moment. A few minutes more, and we were seated by a cheerful, blazing fire, which threw a red light over the dark furniture, rich carpet, and crimson curtains. Beside me was a small table, upon which a hot supper awaited my attention. Questions and exclama-

tions followed each other unceasingly as I laid aside my numerous cloaks and wrappers, and it was not until I was seated, warming my feet, while Mrs. Somers drew from the glittering urn a cup of steaming coffee, that I was able to mark the change which had been wrought in her. Time, which had hardened me into the stiff, demure figure that I was, had metamorphosed the laughing, blue-eyed Agnes Somers into a frail, delicate matron, from whose thin, pale face the flush which excitement had called up was fast passing away. "I am sorry the girls have not returned yet," she said, glancing to the door. "They have extended their walk in the hope of meeting you. But here they are," she exclaimed, as merry voices were heard in the hall. The door opened hastily, and a tall, beautiful girl entered, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks flushed with the cold. I rose, my cup in my hand, while she came forward, and without waiting for an introduction, welcomed me most gracefully and cordially, and then, throwing her arm around my neck, kissed me on the cheek. I was touched—gratified. But alas! for my unfortunate awkwardness! The cup which I still held fell to the ground, and the young lady burst into a fit of clear, musical laughter, in which I in vain endeavored to join. I make no pretensions to being a woman of strong mind, on the contrary, trifles always excite and distress me more than really serious evils. On the present occasion I was exceedingly mortified, and I could willingly have borne with a less musical laugh, if it had not been quite so much prolonged. "I must introduce myself, I see," said a very quiet, sweet voice beside me, and turning I saw for the first time a small, fair, and rather plain-looking girl, who, from her unconscious manner, I instantly concluded had not seen my mishap. "This is Caroline, I presume," I said, as she reseated me, and arranged my footstool more comfortably. "Caroline! oh, no," she replied, "I am Annie." I was silent, and with astonishment recalled the description which Mr. Stephens, the old bachelor brother of Mrs. Somers, had given me of his nieces. "Caroline," he said, "was well enough, he thought her rather plain; but Annie! Annie was really the most beautiful and piquant little thing he ever saw, yes, indeed! Annie was really charming!" "Well, old bachelors have strange fancies," thought I, as I looked at the common

place, and, to tell the truth, rather insignificant little figure beside me, and then glanced at the dark-eyed, smiling beauty, Caroline.

The evening passed swiftly on, and seldom had I passed a more happy one. Both of the sisters seemed intelligent and well-informed; Caroline, I thought, rather the most so. She amused us by her playful sallies, and then, at her mother's request, opened the piano and sang, with very good effect, a thrilling war-song. At any other time I should have admired it extremely, but weary and suffering with the headache, I confess that I felt relieved when the last brilliant crescendo was finished; and she returned to her seat. My heart sank within me when Mrs. Somers insisted upon Annie's singing. I bent my eyes to the floor with a desperate resolve to *look* pleased, and started with surprise and pleasure when with very soft, yet exquisitely modulated tones, she began the Evening Hymn. There was no effort—no labored display. Clear, pure, and simple, the music-prayer broke from the heart of the singer and ascended to heaven, and when the last notes died away I felt the tears of mingled pleasure and sadness stealing down my cheeks. "Certainly," thought I, as I retired for the night, "I have never listened to as sweet a voice as that of Annie Somers."

On entering the parlor on the next morning, I perceived that an addition had been made to the family group in the person of a young boy, or rather man, I should say, for he was just at that age when the name of "boy" is resented as an insult. (What a happy thought was that of Madame de Stael, when she proposed that as a public benefit, all men should sleep from the age of thirteen to that of twenty-four!) "My son George," said Mrs. Somers, presenting him to me. George bowed awkwardly, and took his seat at the table with a look of the most ferocious independence. He did the honors of the table with a desperate attempt at ease in his manner, but was thrown into a state of gloomy despondency by his sister Caroline's casual inquiry, "if he had been out to look at his rabbits this morning?" Rabbits, when he was striving to appear the finished gentleman! Caroline, however, seemed determined that he should impress me favorably by speaking, and speaking well upon every subject which was broached. So apparent was her anxiety to conceal his deficiencies and draw forth all that he *did* know, that poor George's embarrassment became more striking at every attempt which she made. At last, while we were speaking of the peculiar style of some popular preacher, she turned to him and exclaimed, "*you* have heard him, George; pray give Miss Poyntz some idea of his manner." Her unfortunate brother replied by a look of calm desperation. "Can you not

remember even the subject of his discourse?" she whispered, anxiously. Another furious glance—but profound silence. Poor Caroline colored painfully, while I, in pity, made some remark upon the fine flavor of the fish upon the table. Annie replied, and very adroitly turned the conversation upon fishing, hunting, and the different kinds of game to be found in that part of the country. "George met with a singular adventure this summer, while hunting," she said, and at my request began to relate it. She must have possessed a wretched memory, for she made so many blunders that her brother was obliged to correct her, several times. At last he exclaimed, "there, Annie, stop, you are all wrong. I will tell you, Miss Poyntz, how it was," and utterly forgetful of the fact that he was speaking to a stranger, he talked and laughed unconstrainedly until we rose from the table, really proving to be a most entertaining companion.

It was a wet, cold day, and we were in consequence confined to the house. I watched the sisters with increasing interest. I had seldom seen a more striking contrast. Caroline was very beautiful, and her tall, graceful figure, and bright, yet earnest countenance, threw sadly into the shade her sister's simple and rather inexpressive face. Both seemed to be warm-hearted and amiable. Yet Annie was evidently the favorite with all the family. *Annie*, I had heard, was very much admired and loved in society, while her sister was extremely unpopular. What was the charm? I felt its influence, although I could not describe its nature. "There is Mrs. Southward's carriage, mamma," said Caroline, as we sat that afternoon in the library. "I wonder that she can visit so soon after Henry's—" "You forget, Carrie," said Annie, hastily, "no one here has heard it excepting ourselves, and she does not know that. Of course she will not give up her intercourse with her friends in order to keep it secret." "Poor woman! how terribly she must have suffered," said Caroline, her eyes filling with tears; and turning to me, she continued, "she is a widow with an only son, whom she has almost idolized. He has been for some years at a college in the North, and we heard from a friend who resides in the same place, that he was convicted, a few weeks ago, of theft, and then of forgery, and sentenced to imprisonment for a year in the State Penitentiary." She had scarcely concluded when a servant opened the door, and Mrs. Southward entered. She was a pale, sickly-looking woman, with an expression of pain on her face which she endeavored to hide by a forced smile. She conversed for some time upon indifferent subjects, when Caroline exclaimed suddenly, "how is poor Henry, Mrs. Southward?" The poor mother was silent—she cast a terrified look of

inquiry around, her cheek flushed crimson, and then paled again, while Caroline looked at her with earnest sympathy. In vain she tried to speak, the last bitterest sorrow of all had overtaken her. The shame of her son was known. I saw Annie's cheek color as she darted a reproachful look at her sister, but she said quietly, "do you think he will go to Europe without returning home? You mentioned to us that he had some idea of trying a sea voyage for his health when we saw you last." A look of indescribable relief passed over the mother's face. Her secret was safe, or Annie could not speak so composedly. After a few moments she took her leave, to proceed upon the weary round of visits, while her heart was throbbing with shame and misery. And poor Caroline! She was beautiful, affectionate, and talented, yet now I saw that one thing she did not possess—the key which every woman should own if she would unlock the human heart—the sceptre with which she may rule the world:—TACT.

We were still sitting around the library fire, when a servant entered and handed a letter to Caroline. She colored slightly as she opened it, and in a moment exclaimed in evident agitation, "oh, mamma! Mrs. Martyn will be in town tomorrow. Henry is coming this evening." Mrs. Somers started up, all the cares of a housekeeper depicted on her face, and summoning her prime minister, old Mrs. Sordon, entered upon a long and earnest discussion upon the state of the larder, the airing of the chambers, &c. &c. The two girls in the meanwhile left the room. After the important colloquy was over, Mrs. Somers drew her chair close to mine, and began to explain why the announcement of an unexpected visitor had excited so much sensation. She briefly told me that both Caroline and Annie were to be married the ensuing spring. Of Caroline's lover, she spoke in the warmest terms. He was a talented, generous, and prosperous young lawyer. His mother and sisters, whom Caroline had never seen, were expected to pay a visit to some of their relatives who resided in Stelton, and it was their arrival which had been so unexpectedly announced. "Of course," said Mrs. Somers, "Carrie feels anxious to please Mrs. Martyn, knowing how much of her future happiness will depend upon her, for Henry is devotedly attached to his mother." "And have you reason to be equally pleased with Annie's choice?" I asked. A cloud came over her face—"so far as pecuniary affairs are concerned, Annie's prospects are better than her sister's. Mr. Winters is wealthy, and of high standing in his profession, but—there is no positive objection to him," she continued, musingly, "but it is only natural to feel anxious." A violent headache confined me to

my room during the next morning, but I learned that Mrs. Somers had invited quite a large party to meet Mrs. Martyn and her daughters. I was glad to hear it for Caroline's sake, knowing that the presence of strangers would destroy much of the awkwardness attendant upon meeting, for the first time, the critical gaze of those who were soon to be her near relations. In the afternoon I descended to the library. At the door I met a young gentleman, who turned back and was presented to me as Mr. Martyn. There was a cordial frankness in his handsome, intelligent face, to which my heart warmed instinctively. They were all in high spirits, and as he again started to the door, he turned again and said, laughingly, "help me, Miss Poyntz, to persuade this obstinate young lady that perfect simplicity in dress is the perfection of taste." "Not always," I replied. "*Eh bien!*" he said, shrugging his shoulders, "I may be wrong, but for *this* evening, Carrie, pray submit to my orders, and wear white. Adieu! pure white, remember." "I never heard him speak of a lady's dress before," said Caroline. "Then he has some reason for it now," said Annie, "and you ought to oblige him." "Nonsense," laughed her sister, "I shall certainly dress to please myself." "But it is such a little thing," pleaded Annie. "And precisely because it is a trifle it is not worth while to gratify him. You know," she said, turning suddenly round, "if Henry Martyn asked me to cut off my right hand, I would do it." "It is a great deal easier to dress in white," rejoined Annie. But Caroline only laughed.

Supper was over, the girls retired to dress, and Mrs. Somers and myself were seated in the drawing-room, awaiting the arrival of the guests. At last a carriage was heard to stop at the door, and in a few moments Mr. Martyn entered, leading a tall and stately old lady, while several other persons followed. Mrs. Martyn went through the ceremony of introduction with the stiff and formal gravity of a lady of the old school, and then begged leave to present her daughters, two demure and prim-looking damsels, who were fast verging on old maidism. After the party were seated, and all due inquiries made concerning health, the weather, and other similar topics, Henry glanced around the room, and Mrs. Martyn inquired "if Miss Somers—Miss Caroline Somers was at home?" At this moment the door opened and the sisters entered. I saw a shade of annoyance pass over Henry Martyn's face as he looked at Caroline's dress. I too was vexed, although she looked most exquisitely lovely. The many colored folds of a Tartan silk set off her dark style of beauty admirably, and bands of brilliant rubies sparkled in her black hair, and on her snowy neck and arms. Her lover started forward

to meet her, and leading her to his mother, presented her in a low tone as her future daughter. If Caroline had met her with the warm embrace which her heart prompted, all would have been well, but a little appalled by the old lady's stately manner, she merely curtsied low and murmured a few inaudible words. Henry then turned to his sisters, who, chilled by her haughty manner, and mortified by the contrast of her splendid dress with their own, received her with a frigid embrace. Yet they had all come, their hearts filled with affection ready to overflow upon one whom Henry had taught them to love. The arrival of more guests relieved the embarrassing pause that ensued, and Caroline, to hide the sudden tears which had started in her eyes, turned away to receive them, leaving Mrs. Martyn a little more stately than before, and her daughters enveloped in another coat of icy frigidity.

The large rooms rapidly filled. The musicians struck up an inspiring waltz, and the dancers were soon gliding joyously around. Now more than ever I was charmed with Annie; and began to understand why Mr. Stephens had pronounced her piquant and fascinating. Too plain to be disliked by the women, too gentle to be anything but a favorite with the men, she passed through the crowded rooms, pausing to speak to one, bowing and smiling to another, and shaking hands with a third, yet everywhere followed by pleased and admiring glances. I have once or twice met with persons, who, without extraordinary talent, and entirely without beauty, have possessed a kind of fascination that no one could describe or resist. Now this was exactly what Annie Somers possessed, and Caroline wanted. It was not entirely her earnest simplicity, nor her entire forgetfulness of self, though these had their influence; it was her intuitive perception of the characters of others, and the perfect adaptation of everything she said to time and circumstances, and, above all, it was the art she possessed of making every one to whom she spoke feel better pleased with themselves. Not flattery! Oh, no, dear young lady reader, do not curl your lip so contemptuously—not flattery, only the magic art that enabled her to know and touch the pleasant chord, and draw from it cheerful music. She paused by an old man who stood looking gravely at the dancers; the shadows of olden times flitting sadly over his dreamy face. He started at the sound of the laughing voice, calling him to join in some pleasant jest, and as she left him muttered, “not so *very* old after all,” and turned to select a partner for the next quadrille. She talked to Mr. Sands of his bride, inquired for the baby of Mrs. Woods, that perpetually anxious young mother; quietly procured agreeable partners for the Misses Martyn; and

finally presented her bashful brother George to a still more bashful young lady, by whose side he speedily became so bold as to quite distinguish himself in the dance, and at its close asked her to take an ice with the patronizing air of a veteran beau. Even when she only bowed and said “good evening” to Miss A—— and Mr. P——, there was such a pleased and animated smile upon her face, that both Miss A—— and Mr. P—— were certain that Miss Annie Somers was more pleased to see them than any one else in the room, and in consequence felt quite an increase of affection and admiration for her.

I turned to look for Caroline, and found her dancing near me with Henry Martyn. She looked distressed and mortified, and I did not wonder at it. So incessant had been her lover's praises of his mother, that she had unconsciously striven to mould her character into that form which she thought would be most acceptable to her—and now their first meeting was over, and how woeful was the result! She felt, too, that all had been the effect of her dress; for she had seen the startled and disappointed glance which Mrs. Martyn had cast upon her as she entered the room, and that glance had caused her own haughty and reserved manners. “I am sorry,” she said, to Mr. Martyn, as they stood beside me, “that my dress did not please you, or your mother.” Henry looked quickly at her flushed and vexed countenance, and replied laughingly, “it is nothing worth a moment's thought, Carrie; my mother, I think I have told you, was raised among the Quakers, and still retains a somewhat unreasonable prejudice in favor of simplicity in dress. She was a little frightened, I suspect, by finding her future daughter was so very stylish a young lady. But when she sees you in your ‘robes of snowy white or azure blue’ all will be well again.” But Caroline, still a little piqued, was not quite satisfied, and said rather dryly, “if I had been aware that your mother's preference for new acquaintances was regulated by the color of their dress, I should have been more careful.” Henry turned suddenly, an angry flush lightening his eye, but compressing his lips firmly, he was silent. “If you were the husband and not the lover, would you be quite so forbearing, Mr. Martyn?” thought I, as they passed away. Alas! these *ifs*!

I looked across the room, and saw Annie standing by a gentleman who had just arrived. In a few moments she brought him to me, and with a bright, conscious smile presented me to Mr. Winters; and then, after a blushing pause, glided away and left us together. Mr. Winters was a very intelligent—a very gentlemanly man—and, upon the whole, listened to my chit chat, and behaved with more attention and deference than

most gentlemen extend toward old maids; still there was a kind of formality—of indecision in his manners that annoyed me. He seemed afraid to utter a sentiment lest it might not be quite what was approved and sanctioned by the world. He dreaded to move, to speak, to act, lest he might do something which was not perfectly "*comme il faut*." He looked upon all new inventions with nervous horror. He never admired unless the world admired—he never disliked unless the world disliked. "*Qu'en dit on?*" was his motto—the guiding principle of his life. "Oh! Annie Somers!" thought I, as I watched the half apologizing manner in which he glanced at me as he proffered her some simple attentions, "*if* you had not been the wealthy heiress——" Again the *ifs*—what haunting spectres they are in the ill-boding mind of an old maid! But my forebodings and observations were soon to end, for on the next morning I received a letter summoning me to my sister, who was about to start for Europe, and who compelled me to go also.

And thus it was that I left Stelton, and for many years never visited it. What more I heard of my young friends I will tell in as few words as possible, for it was never my intention to write a story, but simply to give a sketch of my visit, hoping that some bright-witted young lady reader might gather a little aid in her toilsome task of rendering herself admired.

Caroline and Annie Somers left their mother's roof at the same time. Caroline for her quiet home in a Western village: Annie to enter into the gay and fashionable society of one of the largest cities in the Union. It was a cold, bleak day when Mr. Winters and his bride stopped at the Astor House, in New York, and were ushered to their rooms. "We will remain here, to-day, Annie," he said, as the waiter disappeared from the parlors. "And when—when," said Annie, hesitatingly, "are we to see your mother and sisters? I am so anxious to know them." "Not until this evening," he replied, "my mother wrote to me, saying that she had given invitations for a large ball to-night, and I think it would be better if we would not go to the house until then, as it is given in honor of our arrival." Annie quietly assented, although she had hoped for a warmer reception. But she was becoming used to disappointments. The three weeks of her married life had done much toward unveiling the true character of her husband. Terrible and bitter had been the agony of the moment when she discovered that it was because she was an heiress that she had been wooed and won. In the first wild confusion of her mind, as the truth rushed upon her, she was tempted to upbraid her husband with his deceit, and then leave him forever. But when this almost frenzied resolve

was banished, she sat down to quietly determine upon some course by which she might win that love which she now plainly saw never had been hers.

How magical is the effect of matrimony in discovering the real character, especially if there is love but on one side! Now that the knot was irrevocably tied which bound them together, Mr. Winters ceased to play the part of the lover, and settled into the selfish and lethargic husband. Annie saw, for the first time, how completely he was guided by the opinion of the world. To the world, then, she turned to gain the influence which was to win his love. If she could but gain the admiration of *the world* she felt that his would soon follow. It was with a beating heart that she looked forward to this evening, for knowing how great would be the effect which the impression she might produce at first would have upon him, she felt as if it were to be the crisis of her fate. Her husband's anxiety was almost as great as her own. Without sufficient penetration to discover the really striking points of Annie's character, he looked forward with terror to the sarcastic criticisms which his old friends would pass on "Winters' homely wife." Yet Mr. Winters was not an ill-disposed man, he was only a weak one.

The evening came; and never did debutante array herself with greater care than did poor Annie. At times she felt inclined to give up the effort, and remain content to be an unloved, neglected wife. But her loving heart whispered, "persevere," and she continued her task. It was with a fluttering heart that she heard her husband's voice in their private parlor as she left her dressing-room. "Come, Annie," he said, "here is my brother Frank, come to escort us home." She raised her eyes and met the admiring gaze of a stranger, who welcomed her most cordially as his new sister. "'Tou honor, George," he exclaimed, "you *are* a lucky fellow," and then, recollecting himself, colored, and was silent.

Poor Annie need not have trembled so violently as her husband led her through the brilliant throng assembled in his mother's drawing-room, could she have "seen herself as others saw her." A bride, and particularly a wealthy one, is always admired if she possesses the least claim to either beauty or intelligence; and Annie had seldom appeared to so much advantage as on this evening. The delicate folds of her lace robe floated airily around her petite and exquisitely graceful figure; her fair curling hair was confined by a bandeau of diamonds, the only ornament she wore; and her shoulders and arms, white and dimpled as a child's, were left bare. There was a sudden pause in the dancing as the young couple entered,

but as she passed up the room, Annie's cheek flushing, and her eyes downcast, an involuntary murmur of admiration ran through the room, and when she had been received by Mr. and Mrs. Winters, every one pressed forward to be presented. There was something so touching in the appealing glance of the stranger, as she received the welcomes which were showered upon her, that every heart warmed toward her with a feeling of hospitality and kindness.

Mrs. Winters, ere many weeks passed, became the belle and leader of fashion. She was pronounced charming, fascinating, irresistible. Her *bon-mots* were repeated, her dress was copied, her wit, her dancing, her peculiar *style* became the rage. Mr. Winters was lost in astonishment, when the quiet, plain little Annie, whom he had looked down upon so patronizingly, suddenly ascended, and became a star of the first magnitude in the world which he had so long worshipped and followed. Nothing could be more amusing than the eagerness with which he brought his friends to the spot where Annie stood, surrounded by a crowd, to present them "to his wife." And all this was owing to her one quality of Tact! The impression first made by her was never suffered to grow dim; once the object of general attention as an heiress and a bride, it was an easy thing to continue so. Her husband regarded her with a kind of deferential awe, as he saw her fascinate all who approached her, and when she still turned to him so gently and lovingly for support and protection, the feeling of gratified pride insensibly assumed a warmer nature. *He loved her.*

I must bring my hasty sketch to a conclusion. Years passed on. The influence which Annie gained over her husband imperceptibly deepened. She led him gradually from the vortex of fashionable life, by rendering his home ever pleasant by the charm of novelty until he learned to love it. She infused into his mind new principles of action. All this she said so quietly that he fancied *he* was the guiding spirit, and she the passive follower.

Some ten years after my first visit to Stelton, I saw the sisters. Both resided in a small town in New York. Mr. Winters and Mr. Martyn were alike in reduced circumstances. I was passing through the town, and concluded to spend a day with them. I found Caroline much altered. The bright, beautiful girl had become a haggard, careworn woman, and her dress was not only plain, but very untidy and soiled. Caroline would have thought it a waste of time to *dress* for the gratification of her husband and children. Yet she had suffered much for them. She had toiled unceasingly to serve them; her property had been resigned cheerfully to meet Henry's debts;

yet, by a uniform disregard of trifles in their intercourse, she had failed to win their gratitude. Utterly incapable of understanding the characters and peculiar disposition of her children, she was unable to sympathize with them, and with strong love that would have braved a world to serve them, she remained an unloved mother.

She received me with a warm welcome, uttering at the same time many condolences upon my wretched looks, which certainly did not tend to make me feel comfortable. I spent an unhappy day. I had never been in a family where there seemed to be so little love. It was like some machine where a connecting link was wanting. Every part grated harshly against the rest. Mr. Martyn met me cordially. He too was broken. The once frank, handsome face was clouded by a shadow that reminded me of other causes than care. He was fast regaining part of his old cheerful manner, when the eldest boy suddenly burst into the room, exclaiming, "oh, mamma! Aunt Annie is going to let the boys have a dance to-night—may we go?" "Certainly not," said the mother, severely. "Your Aunt Annie may do as she pleases with her children, but I will indulge mine in no such folly. Go to your lessons, Frank." Frank left the room muttering, and with a scowl upon his face. "You might let them go," said Mr. Martyn, "children need some amusement, Caroline." Conscious that she was not perfectly right, Caroline's cheek flushed angrily, as she said, "pray do not interfere with me in my management of the children. *I can govern myself, and, therefore, am more capable of governing them.*" "And why cannot I govern myself?" he asked, in a tone of suppressed passion. "No one who sees you pass the restaurants would ask that question," she replied. Springing up with a muttered curse, he left the room, while I sat in astonished silence. "It is the truth," she exclaimed, bursting into tears. "He drinks—I have known it long, and only waited till a stranger was present to tell him of it. This mortification may save him." Seeing how useless was remonstrance, I proposed that we should walk over to Mrs. Winters. She acceded, and we went.

We found Annie in the midst of a group of happy children, playing while they danced. Her greeting was as warm and heartfelt as ever. Mr. Winters met us with a smiling face and outstretched hand. He called the children to us, and presented them proudly. "Our little ones are just having a dance, Miss Poyntz," he said, after we were seated. "I have always thought, and told Annie, that the best way to keep our sons from temptation abroad is to make home pleasant to them." There was a quiet smile on

Annie's placid face that made me doubt if the suggestion came from him. We passed a delightful evening until near the close, when a servant arrived to summon Caroline home, as Frank was seriously injured in a fight in which he had been engaged on the street.

The next morning I went on my way, and saw the sisters no more. But a lesson was imprinted on my mind that I would willingly teach to my female readers: it is, that there is a quality more to be desired in woman than beauty or genius—TACT. In other words a knowledge of human nature, joined to a loving heart; a simple practice in trifles of the Saviour's rule, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you."

CAROLINE BRADSHAW.

A STORY OF NEW ENGLAND LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 38.

The Village, Tuesday, 31st.

OUR grand-parents and Laura came with me. Henry was already here; he rode over, as is his daily practice, in the morning.

Before we were settled down to our sewing, while yet grandmother was going from one thing to another, overlooking the plants; and, from the windows, the garden, to see how all things had been coming on, the doctor came into our midst, as if by right and title, he were one of us. Again the glow and smile on Laura's face; again, as one could see by the ribbons that fastened her collar, the soft flutter and commotion in her heart. The doctor held her hand a little longer than he did ours; his eyes lingered longer on her face. If she spoke, he caught all the words as if they were so many pearls; and when, at Jemmy's call, she went out into the garden to see his lettuce-bed, he followed her, singing, "I'm going out where Laura is."

I looked out, after some time, and the pair stood in the shade. The doctor leaned against a tree looking down on Laura, who, meanwhile, busied herself picking leaves from a shrub at her side and tearing them to pieces. I could not see that either of them attended to Jemmy's lettuce-bed.

While they were there, the Misses Boynton came in. They saw me come and could not wait, they said. They *must* come in and see me, early as it was! Would I not be a good girl, and go over with them to their house? for they had a cactus in bloom, which they had been dying to show me. They had been *so* afraid the flowers would fall before I came over, if *ever* I came! They had told Henry about it, three—yes, *four* days ago. He did his errand, like a good boy, of course. No. No? why, then he was a bad one, and must be tapped with Adaline's fan. *Wouldn't* I go over then with them?

I asked to be excused until to-morrow.

No; for the flowers *certainly* would not stay on until another day. I must go then; and they fluttered around me. Adaline fluttered around Henry, begging him to help them tease. Or, would not he go too? Ah, yes; that was just the thing! he would go, surely? *Wouldn't* he go? Come! like a good boy!

If Caroline wanted to see the flowers, he had no objections, Henry said; and added, turning to me, "I think we had better go, Caroline. Let us go now."

"Now you've no excuse!" said they, delighted, and again besieging me.

I could not see why I had not the same excuse as before. In truth, I do not want to be with them. If they had nothing to do with the unlawful bankruptcy of their father and brother, they are coarse and ill-natured, as I have had many a chance to see. To-day I saw malicious sneers pass over their faces, when they caught glimpses of the doctor and Laura in the garden. But they overcame me, as they almost always do when they attempt it, by their ill-bred pertinacity. "Why, there is no reason why you should not just go over for a few minutes!" said they. "What can be the reason that you don't want to go?"

I could not muster impudence equal to their own, and so tell them the true reason. I therefore said nothing; but with a sigh of vexation went to bring my bonnet, comforting myself a little with the thought that, in this way, we would be rid of them. Henry accompanied us. And, lo! when we came into Mr. Boynton's parlor, we met not only the cactus flowers, but Mr. Andrew Boynton also. I was heartily vexed at the sly, foolish stratagem of the girls; and then by no means soothed to see by the dimples setting back at the corners of Henry's mouth, and by his narrow eyes, that he was not vexed, only amused; in part, no doubt, by the stratagem, and in part, perhaps, by my vexation. The girls bit their lips and tried various other devices to conceal their satisfaction. As for the young man himself, how I hated him; how sick I was of all his looks, and ways, and speech, before I had been ten minutes in his company! He minded his words, he screwed himself into all sorts of conceivable attitudes and shapes. He would let me have no peace with the flowers—which were truly splendid—but soon it was so that I hated the flowers too; for he touched the tip of one long, white finger; of another long, white finger; to one petal to another petal; "and did I not think so and so?" he asked, "was I not charmed?"

"How is your mother to-day, Miss Boynton?"

I asked, abruptly turning away from the flower, after according a most ungracious "yes!" to his last question.

Mrs. Boynton came instantly, looking as if she thought the world were just made; and in a few minutes more came her husband, with an expression as if he were abundantly equal to distinguish between the moon and a green cheese; and as if he *knew* he were equal to it. But, "suffice it to say," as the story-writers have it, between them all I was nearly dragged to death with flatteries, innuendoes, inquiries, entreaties to prolong my call to the utmost possible length, to run in often, and not consider myself a stranger *there!* not by any means! no indeed! no indeed!

Ah, I am vexed! But this makes me the crossest of anything. Henry knew whom we would meet there, and helped me to go, although he knew how I have been troubled by the girls on his account. He even found a pleasure in that which was such a provocation to me. I read it in the dimples, and in the look of humor about his eyes. I will not easily forgive this in Henry. Another might have done it; but not he.

He looked aslant at me as we came along home in silence, as if he would read my thoughts in my face. I had been thinking—"well! I am heartily provoked! and not only with all the Boyntons, but with Henry more than with them. I shan't be in the least gracious to him until he sues for pardon—at least, by his looks, certainly not while those saucy dimples remain there in sight!" This had passed. I was thinking then—"well! he has plagued me, and now I will plague him. He has had his full share of amusement out of it, and soon I will have mine."

"Were they not beautiful flowers?" said I, quietly meeting his looks.

"Yes, quite; and how—what can be your opinion of Mr. Andrew Boynton?"

He expected me to say all the contemptuous things of him that I felt; but, on the contrary, I looked demurely on the ground, and said, "oh, one can't tell at once. One must be better acquainted to appreciate him fairly. He has a *beautiful* hand; did you notice it?"

"Yes; yes, his hand is well enough; but——" He paused, but I did not help him on; and thus in silence we reached the parlor, where, by this time, they were all assembled; the doctor's children, for whom Aunt Agnes had sent, with them. Others, who had been invited to meet us, soon came; Dr. Sprague and his wife, who had been the friend of our grand-parents for forty years; the Carters, the Burnhams, our good clergyman, his wife and daughters—all of them most intelligent, most agreeable people. We went here and there through parlors, hall, yard and garden; not once coming together, all of us, except at supper.

I several times saw Henry making his way toward me; when, without showing him that I noticed his approach, I betook myself to new quarters. We did not once, therefore, come fairly together. When he left it was with our grand-parents and Laura. I was busy with the bonnets and gloves of the others who were leaving at the same time, and just called out, "good-bye, Cousin Henry."

He looked back and said, simply, "good-bye, Caroline;" but giving the little phrase a cadence that went through my heart—that does now—like the tolling of a bell. I am sorry I began the foolish game; or rather, that I carried it on a moment. Henry began it, he whose part it is to be so sincere, so friendly to me! Heigh-ho—I will see to-morrow whether the dimples are gone; whether his eyes are graver. If they are.

August 1st.

He did not come over to-day. An old classmate is visiting him, the doctor says. One would think that he might bring his classmate to the village to see it and us.

Aunt Agnes and I have made many calls to-day. I have taken a long walk this evening with Tiger; and, on my way back, I met Mr. Andrew Boynton and sisters, who thereupon turned and accompanied me home.

Cards have been sent out to-day for their party, which is to be on Friday.

The doctor took his little girls to the west part of the town with him to-day; and, on his way back, stopped to take his tea at grandfather's. What with doctors and classmates, and so on, I can easily conceive that I shall not be missed by Henry and Laura. Grandmother sent me a bunch of *mignonette*, my favorite among the summer flowers. Heigh-ho.

The 2nd.

Henry called to-day on his way to the office. But the everlasting Boynton girls were here, so that he looked neither one way nor the other; and there was nothing left for me to do but to say, "good morning" when he came, and again when we went; interposing a remark or two upon the disagreeableness of the day; and a question or two about the grand-parents and Laura. He answered with Adaline fluttering between us. I did not once get a fair look into his eyes.

He ran in again on his way home; but Mr. Andrew Boynton and Uncle Harrison came at the same time. Again things went miserably. Uncle must show Henry a long paragraph in the "Union;" Boynton must show me himself; and I had no comfort. This time I detected the aslant glance in Henry, and the dimples, and the lively twinkle. I did not look at him once more; but was all eyes, ears, and voice to Boynton; who thereupon became—*ineffable*. What else can one suppose he became?

Again the careless "good-bye, Henry," when he left; I listened sharply; but this time the tones of his reply were as careless as my own.

Boynton sat some time longer; but uncle entertained him with politics to my great relief.

The 4th.

In their attempts to outdo all precedents in the line of parties here at New London, the Boyntons went beyond their depth, and made heavy, laborious work of it. The day was sultry and heavy; everything was as heavy as lead. The doctor, Uncle Harrison and Henry are generally the life of people on all social occasions. But the doctor was not there; he was not invited. Uncle Harrison accompanied us; but his head is full of politics lately, and legislative enactments. He kept mostly, during the first part of the evening, with Mr. Lane, Dr. Sprague's son-in-law, who is one of the members from this town. Laura did not come; and Henry came only at a late hour. I had been a long time watching the door for him, every moment expecting to see him appear there. I longed to have him come; and still dreaded meeting him there in the crowd, since things had been going so badly with us of late. If I could just see him first in the hall, or at the door; and hold his hand a moment in mine, meanwhile speaking honest, hearty words, and hearing the same from him, then all would be right; then the burden would go from my heart. But I was surrounded by the Boyntons. Would I go to the piano? Andrew was so fond of a well-executed piano! Would I sing? My voice was some way so sweet! Andrew doated on the voice; and they were such bunglers compared with me, much as pa had spent on them! Was I too warm? Were the rooms uncomfortable for me, any way?

"Oh, yes!" sighed I, putting out my arms in genuine discomfort. "The rooms are hot!"

Andrew flew to let down windows, to put up windows. I fancy some of the guests got sore-throats. But Toots-like (in more than one sense) the Boyntons would have said, in chorus, "no consequence—no consequence," if such a result had been hinted at.

There! Andrew had got through! he had made things comfortable for me! and he was back there, dodging my thanks with his self-complaisant eyes and smile. But I was heavy of heart. I had not life wherewithal to speak; I only wished sluggishly that he and all the Boyntons were in France; and that Henry and I were somewhere where it was quiet and cool, where there were not so many people going about like shadows.

At length Andrew disappeared; and I breathed more freely. I could look about me, seeing that the people were not all shadows, feeling that life was not all a dream. I was unspeakably relieved, inasmuch that I fancy he has all the baneful

qualities of the torpedo about him. Ah, dear! I have a real dread of him, even now. I think now that if I may never see him again, while I live, I will not mind any other calamity that may befall me. And the whole family—I would not have believed, one month ago, that any people who do not go lurking in the dark places, with cold steel in their hands, could be so frightful. But I suppose I am nervous to-day; for I have not slept of late. I suppose I had better forget the Boyntons, since their remembrance troubles me, and think and write of him who is so different, whose presence is so good, so refreshing to me. This can be none other than my Cousin Henry.

"Let us go out into the piazza, aunt, where it is cooler," whispered I, while the Boynton girls were taking their places at the piano. "It is so uncomfortable here!—and perhaps we shall see Henry coming."

We were near the open doors, and went out without being noticed or followed.

No Henry was in sight; but the air was cool and good; and we sat down there, saying that we would stay and make Uncle Harrison hunt for us; thus giving him a chance to learn, in his want of us, that we are much better and more interesting than his darling politics.

"I kind o' thought it was you two when I seed ye comin' out here, speaking softly and stepping softly," said Mrs. Cheever, coming up to us. "I've been out here by the window hearin' the pianny. There was such a buzzin' goin' on atween the kitchen an' parlor, that I couldn't hear nothin' clear. Ye didn't 'xpect ter see me here ter the party, I reckon?"

"You came over to help them, I suppose," said aunt. I was straining my eyes looking through the darkness after Henry.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Cheever. "An' bein' as they want me ter help clear up to-morrow, they thought I'd better stay. Car'line," drawing closer to me, and looking very sly, "they think Arndrer's got you fast. I heerd 'em a talkin' an' braggin' about it terday. They think you're awful smit with 'im. Are ye?"

"Me? no, I despise him."

"I thought so. Look 'ere!" drawing still closer and laughing; "he's out there in the summer-house, a smokin'. He smokes a sight; arter he eats, an' afore he eats, he smokes and smokes. But he's mazin' sly about it; goes out there inter the summer-'ouse allers ter do it, so't I needn't see 'im an' tell you on 't. You! I wish you an' your aunt would jist go 'long, kind o' walkin' out, ye know, an' happen ter go along inter the summer-'ouse. I guess that'd cure him o' breakin' yer heart so, fer your great love of him. He'd lose all o' his big feelin's ter once, an' sneak off ter Lowell termorrow or next day."

"Mrs. Cheever," Mrs. Boynton called from a back door, "where are you? Wont you come down and help a little about supper?"

Mrs. Cheever left us immediately.

"Come," said aunt, rising and taking my hand. "It is time that you were rid of this; and he will go off, as Mrs. Cheever says, if you can find him there smoking."

How we laughed! how we exulted in what we were doing! but noiselessly, as with quick, light steps we went through the open gate, and down the walk to the arbor. It is densely covered with grape-vines, and this occasioned that he did not see us until we stood side by side at the entrance.

"The devil!" said he, starting to his feet, throwing down his cigar, and stamping on it as if it were the fiend he had just evoked.

"Ah! you don't smoke, I hope, Mr. Boynton!" I said, suppressing my merriment, and blowing the smoke away from me.

"Ah! I hope not!" said aunt, also blowing the smoke. "Shall we go, Caroline?—cigar smoke is so offensive to you!"

"Yes, we will go. Pray don't let this interrupt you, Mr. Boynton."

By the time we turned to go, he had rallied considerably. We could not see his face distinctly, but his voice was tolerably composed when he said, joining us, "then you are no friend to the cigar, Miss Bradshaw?"

"Ah, no!" replied I, shuddering with the real nausea it always occasions me.

"Well, it is a foolish practice. I contracted it at the clubs while I was in Boston. I have been thinking lately that I must break off."

Thus was I foiled in my stratagem; and I felt it at the moment, that thus I deserved to be foiled in the practice of that which I so heartily disapprove and habitually avoid. I was twice foiled; for just as we three came up to the door together, Henry appeared at the gate. Boynton bustled forward to meet him, and took him immediately into the house, giving aunt and me hardly a chance to speak to him. But now I was indifferent. I was not worthy, I felt, at that moment of awakening contrition, to speak to him, to hear him speak to me, as he had done until within those late days of my folly. I so love *truth*, truth in the heart, on the lips and in one's action, that I half-envy the martyrs who have died for its sake; yet I had been deliberately planning falsehood, and deliberately carrying it out in my words and in my ways. I despised myself. Aunt was saying something to me, but I did not attend to her. I could scarcely avoid falling into passionate weeping; and oh, how I longed to be in my still chamber, and alone with my God, that I might bring all my trouble and folly to Him, and

beg his forgiveness, his protecting care for the future!

"Come, come!" said aunt, drawing me along. "I have been seeing through the window that your uncle is looking after us. Let's go in."

"You go in, dear aunt; but let me stay here. There is nothing in there that I want."

Aunt let her arm slide lovingly about my waist, and said, "don't be troubled, my dear, about what Mrs. Cheever said. We have all seen it before, you know, what their plan is. I hoped he would be so mortified at our finding him there, that you would have no more trouble on his account. But I don't know—at any rate you can——"

"I can speak the truth to him, aunt, and act it. In this way I can easily show him what my sentiments are, and that it will be useless for him to press his. The sober, sincere truth is best, after all, in such cases."

"Yes, so it is. Yes, be sincere with him; that is the best way—let what will come. But now—ah, there is my good man! Harrison, here! we come now."

Uncle came along the piazza to us with quick steps. What! where had we been? he asked. Were we tired of his and Mr. Lane's politics? He begged our forgiveness for this one time. He would let politics alone the rest of the evening; and keep himself in readiness to pick up fan or bouquet; to talk with us about—he did not finish his lively jests; for aunt knew that some saucy thing was coming next, and playfully laid her hand on his lips.

Henry was standing with the Lanes, when we returned to the parlor. He looked up a moment, but immediately resumed his conversation with them. We crossed over directly to them. He looked in my face, coolly at first, then inquiringly; and then in the kind old way, asked if I were quite well that evening.

"Yes," I replied. "I am well, but all out of tune."

He laughed, looked cordially in my face, and, taking my hand, drew it through his arm.

"Out of tune, are you? Come out here to this window-seat, and tell me all about it. What is the matter?" he asked, finding that I hesitated to speak, although now we were standing quite by ourselves. "Come! tell me; for I have something that I want to say to you. How happens it that you are out of tune?"

"Why, I know, that, in these last few disagreeable days, you don't like me at all; and, what is more trying still, that I don't deserve that you like me." I looked down with eyes full of tears.

"Now this is like my Cousin Caroline! It is just the sincere thing I longed to have you do;

because, Caroline, we can neither of us be happy, unless there is peace and a perfect openness between us."

We said no more then; for the call to the supper-tables came. Henry led me to the table, he helped me, he filled his own plate; but we neither of us ate much. It was meat and drink to me, standing again by Henry, and having his smile rest on me.

I hardly noticed it then; but I remember now that Boynton came toward me, as if for the purpose of leading me to the table; but stopped on seeing me with Henry. I know that he stood near us during supper; but I hardly saw it at the time. His presence, his idea no longer troubled me. With Henry for my friend, I could not feel that anything on earth had power to annoy me. He accompanied me home. We loitered, so that we had time for the little explanations there were to be made, and for seeing it become clear between us.

I see that I have uselessly and causelessly tormented myself. Henry advised our going to see the cactus flowers, because he saw no other way of our being left to ourselves. When there, he was amused, not at my annoyances, but at the palpable exertions to secure me for young Boynton.

Evening.

Henry is sick to-day. He took cold last night, the doctor thinks; and to-day is feverish and restless. He sent me a fresh little bouquet made up of the fragrant blossoms I love best. Now I believe that the time of trial comes. I believe that he will die before another year.

The doctor brought me a note from Laura, full of affection, full of "the deep quietude of joy," concluding with—"I am sorry poor Henry is so unwell to-day. I wish you were here to stay by him; I am so distraught with all the things that are happening and going to happen, I fear I don't attend to him as I ought. He sits and rocks, and holds your little pocket Bible in his hands. He is a dear, a dear Henry.

"But the doctor, you can't *begin* to think how I like him. He is exactly the kind of man I have always thought I could love best. If I can only make him as happy as he deserves to be!

"Isn't papa kind? he bids me use his gift in the way of a *trousseau*; and offers to remit another sum equal to this. But, Caroline, dear, I have determined that I will be as simple as any little Quaker body in the land. My mother's wedding-dress shall be my wedding-dress. The material is very rich, you know. It was made with an open skirt, and mamma had a petticoat like it, so that there is enough silk for any form. Beyond this one dress I shall adhere to my simple gingham and muslins for summer, and my *de*

laines for winter; for I shall find a great many little wants in the children's clothes and all through the house; some of which the doctor does not see, probably; others are beyond his means with the still remaining debts. But! come over and hear all about it; and tell me if you will, one day this week, ride over to Concord with me to buy webs of cloth. Alas! for the landscape painting! What will be done with those half-finished 'Pilgrims at the Shrine?' It is such a grand thing, the subject is so noble and good, I would like to finish just that one, and have it framed for our parlor. Beyond this adieu to painting. And I say it without regret, with joy, even; for better to me than all the landscape painting in the world, will be my work of taking care of the doctor and the motherless children. Now you shall see that I *can* be done with this writing. Thine—thine, LAURA.

"P. S.—The doctor wants to be married early in September. I am quite out of breath thinking of it. *Do* come over!

"P. S. 2nd.—We have a beautiful plan. You have heard of the doctor's nephew, Augustus Cummings, the clergyman. He has not been here since he was a boy; he has been at his studies constantly; and, besides, his very odd uncle has seemed to wish to monopolize him. The doctor saw him, however, when he was at Cambridge, last season. He liked him exceedingly; they have corresponded since; and the nephew has promised that he will visit the uncle this season. Don't you see? The doctor says that he must be here at the wedding. I say that he and you, or poor, dear Henry and you, must stand with us at the altar. I shall listen to no other plan. See this postscript!"

I shall go over to-morrow to see the child, that is, if Henry remains at home. But Augustus Cummings! What can one think of this?

The 27th.

Three weeks I have been away from my diary. I went over to grandfather's, intending to stay a few hours only. But Henry was so sick; and every hour growing worse; shaking with cold, at the same minute that his lips were parched with the burning breath. He rose out of his easy-chair and tried to meet us when we came; but he staggered and almost fainted. Uncle Harrison and grandfather led him immediately to bed, where he has lain ever since in severe lung fever, until this week he begins to sit up and look about him a little.

There never was so gentle a sufferer. We were all distressed by the patience, the tearful gratitude for our little attentions, the solicitude for our case, when he saw that we scarcely ate, or slept in our care and anxiety for him. He was so little earthly, it seemed to us that he was

becoming like unto the angels, so that this earth would no longer be the place for him, and he would pass to the more genial home in heaven. But God had mercy on us. He listened to our prayer and left him for us. I am thankful; and yet I weep for Henry. He wished to go, although now that he finds he is to live on, he looks on us, and out on the green earth with eyes full of gladness.

He is still very weak. His appetite does not return; and I sometimes think the doctor feels much less hopeful than ourselves, about him.

Henry drove me away, that I might be rested, he said, and ready to serve him when he is able to ride over. He hopes that this will be next week.

The 30th.

One does not feel like writing in a diary in these days. So much goes on; there is enough to do, enough to see to, which way soever one turns. Tuesday, I went to Concord with grandfather and Laura, to buy "webs and webs of cloth," as Mrs. Cheever says. They stopped here to leave me, on the way back. I dexterously abstracted two of said webs; and yesterday and to-day, by staying close in aunt's chamber, only running down to our meals, we have nearly covered the grass in the clothes-yard with the newly-made sheets, pillow-cases, table-cloths and towels; and, all the while, we rejoice like two children over what we are doing.

Henry remains nearly the same, the doctor says; although he can see that he gains. He thinks he gains as fast as we have reason to expect him to, after illness so severe.

Tuesday, September 4th.

A great thing has happened. Mr. Alfred Cummings, the miserly uncle, is dead; and has left, by his last will, (by the way, they say he has made many wills) but by his last will, he has left two thousand dollars to his brother, the doctor; and the rest of all his large possessions to his nephew, Mr. Augustus Cummings. This places the doctor firmly on his feet once more. It will enable him to pay off all his little debts, uncle says, and to purchase a field of a half dozen acres that stretches out back of his buildings, and for the ownership of which he has long been sighing. He wishes that the fruit trees and the grape-vines be coming on in that field, that he may have pleasant and profitable employment, when the time comes that he no longer can ride with ease over these high, rough hills.

The 28th.

The doctor is already in possession of the long-coveted field. There came to-day letters from his brother's executor and from his nephew. The latter gentleman will be here in a few days, to remain until after the wedding

Laura has been over to the shops to-day, to make little purchases of articles not thought of by us, when we were in Concord. The girl has let the flowers go out of the inside of her bonnet. She wore no collar; and, with her modest drab shawl pinned snugly to her form, and the careful looks and ways she has been acquiring so rapidly of late, she looked like a busy little matron, quite old and staid enough for the vigorous Dr. Cummings.

Henry is better. He will come over to-morrow. He hopes to be able to attend church half of the day; then he will come here for the rest of the day, for several days. Uncle, aunt and I rode over this morning, carrying the piles of made-up cottons and linens. Laura was surprised. Her eyes were blinded a moment by the great tears; but she had no time for them. She brushed them off hastily, and took us out to see what she and grandmother had been doing. Yes, that is always the way; if we do the best we can, thinking, as we work, that this time we are really doing great things, that even grandmother cannot beat that, it turns out, as it did to-day, that, without ado about it, without self-gratulations or vanity, grandmother has been accomplishing twice as much as we. We said as much to her as we looked over the articles bleaching on the grass, the articles not in need of bleaching, made ready for "the wash," and on those already washed, ironed, and in the drawers.

"Oh, well," said she, in consoling tones, and shutting a drawer, "you will find when you have worked as many years as I have, that it will go off quick and easy with you too. We must creep a while before we can walk, in housekeeping, as in everything else. Agnes, you must know this. You get along twice as easy as you did five years ago."

"Yes, ten times as easy, mother. But I shall never be *your* equal, never."

"Then it will be no fault of yours. You try hard enough. But your young days, the days when things come easiest, were spent among the books; mine, in the kitchen and dairy—chiefly; I went to school a few months every year. See! there is Henry! the poor child! how tall he looks! I shall be glad when he gets that gown off; for whenever I see him now he makes me think of his mother. For three or four months she walked through the house as Henry does, looking so tall, wasted as she was, and in her long, loose dress—and so pale! We have been gone a long time; let's go back; I don't like to have him walking through the hall, there is such a current."

We had caught a glimpse of him crossing the hall, from the back bed-room where we were. Grandmother looked sick at heart as we turned away from the drawers. Laura was pale; I—I

don't know how I looked; but I felt as if death, himself, instead of Cousin Henry, had just crossed the way before us, chilling, almost freezing me with his icy presence.

Henry strove to smile when we returned to him; but, oh, the weary, languid look!

Grandfather and Uncle Harrison came in directly. They had been going over the fields; and their accounts of all the promise they found in the corn and the potatoes, revived us somewhat. Henry especially hung upon their words, and watched their animated faces. We must all go out into the garden, they said, to see how the rich acorn-squashes had been growing there entirely hidden by the broad leaves. Grandpapa did not even know that he had any acorn-squashes growing; they had been so sly! Uncle Harrison found them; and, therefore, he should have the best one on the vines, to carry home for dinner to-morrow. I was checked in the midst of my rejoicings over the dinner, by seeing that Henry's eyes were full of large, shining tears. The poor fellow has no appetite yet.

"Go out, girls, and look at the acorn-squashes," said he, finding that Laura and I did not stir, although the rest were already on the way, and had twice called us. "And bring me a flower, Caroline. I will not tell you what one I want; let me see if you will bring me the right one."

Now I had a short notice for going. While the rest went to the farther side of the garden to look at the hidden squashes, I remained near the gate, looking after a sprig of mignonette. Henry had broken nearly all of it off to bring over to me.

When hunting, I heard Henry singing in low tones, which were often interrupted by the hacking cough that remains of the fever. I went nearer the gate and listened. He was singing—"I am Weary."

"I am weary of straying! oh! fain would I rest,
In the far distant land of the pure and the blest,
Where sin can no longer her blandishments spread,
And tears and temptations forever are fled."

I cannot tell how this affected me. The tones were so sad and low, so different from those I had been accustomed to hear from Henry! And the hacking cough, so often stopping him!

I broke a sprig of mignonette and returned to the house. When I went in he was singing—

"I am weary, but ah! never let me repine,
While thy word, and thy love, and thy promise are mine."

"That is a dear Caroline!" said he, as soon as he caught a glimpse of me through the open door. His eyes brightened still more at sight of the mignonette. "That is it!" said he, in joyful tones, taking the flower and the hand that offered it together to his lips. Still holding my hand,

he drew a taboret a little nearer to him, that I might sit down close before him. "I am glad you came back, Caroline," said he, after a little pause. "It was so lonely here after you went!" I answered his faint smile with another. I could not venture to speak; my heart was too full. I think he saw what I suffered; for he added, laying his hand on my head, which now I bent to conceal the tears—"my poor child!—you and I are learning early what it is to suffer and to need a heavenly support. But we love each other, and this is a dear thing; not as those who marry and are given in marriage do we love; but as two who, after going a little farther side by side, must be parted for a while, but only to meet again, dearest." He bent his head to mine, and was silent a moment; for now I was sobbing like a child. "I shall be with you often," resumed he; "and you will love to feel this, and to give yourself to communion with me, at night, at all times, when you would be lonely without the memory of me, and of the good hours we have had together. Go now, dearest, to your chamber until you are calm. They are coming from the garden; and your grandfather and grandmother must have no shock; must see no tears—yet."

I caught his hand to my lips a moment, and hurried out just as I heard the busy voices approaching the house. Going to Laura's chamber, I drove back the tears to my heart; bathed my eyes in cold water; and breathing a prayer to heaven for support for myself, for Henry, for all who love him, I felt strengthened, and returned to the sitting-room with composed features. They were showing the acorn-squash to Henry, while he was praising its fair surface, its noble and beautiful proportions.

"And you will see, Henry," said Aunt Agnes, putting on her gloves for our return home, "you will see that, in cooking it, I shall infuse some invisible charm that shall make it delicious, even to your taste."

"That would be so good!" said he. "Caroline, your glove plagues you; let me fasten it. I so long to find something that will taste as my victuals used to!"

I only dread that he may not have strength to get here; or, that, if he comes, he will have no appetite for the boiled squash. Aunt Agnes will be as much disappointed as myself if he has not; for she has set her heart on his loving it, and many other dishes that she has planned, and which she will bring forward, one of them at each meal, until she shall find that appetite and strength are restored to him. She sat silent and thoughtful a few moments after telling her plans, and then looked up with a long sigh.

"I wonder what those sick people *can* do," said she, "who have no friend on earth to attend

to them, and prepare the tempting, nourishing little bits for them! I am sure I have seen the time when I should have sank away and died, if I had had no friends to exert themselves for me—just as Henry would do now."

"God takes care of all his children," said Uncle Harrison. "If one of them suffers, and has no parent, or wife, or other friend near, He has made provisions for the emergency. He has put that into the hearts of all his children, which can never look on *helpless* suffering unmoved. If it is encrusted with ever so much selfishness and hardness and frivolity, it rises and makes its way through, and does its heavenly work."

"Yes, thank God it does!" replied aunt, with filling eyes. "I have seen this many a time; and it is so beautiful to see it where one only looks for folly or sin! It makes one believe that there is good somewhere, and in some degree in the heart of the worst being that lives; and that it would come into activity and redeem the whole man, if only the right circumstances might come along to bring it out."

The 10th.

It is quiet through the whole house; all are still at their rest; and I will write. It will be of Henry, of course. People hear nothing from me lately, that does not concern him.

He was stronger yesterday. He remained through the morning service; was greatly fatigued by it; but the exercise in the air gave him an appetite for the boiled squash and the boiled mutton. It was good! he said, looking over to the dish for more. We were all so glad, so grateful, we could easily have let some tears fall in our laps. The doctor came in to see about the dinner: he had heard of it Saturday evening at grandfather's. The good man looked as happy as the rest when he saw how Henry ate, and how his eyes brightened. But he couldn't stop to dine with us, as we all entreated—except Laura—for his own dinner waited by that time, he said; and his nephew was there to eat it with him. He must taste the squash and mutton though, that Henry found so good; but he would not sit; Uncle Harrison, therefore, took some into a pie-plate for him, and he ate it standing, praising it and laughing about "those ridiculous Boyntons." He says the elder Boynton called on him Saturday, to say that he has a long time been intending to make up his loss by his failure, all the same as if he had made no use whatever of the bankrupt act. This had been his plan from the beginning. He felt bad about the trouble the business had caused him, and so did Mrs. Boynton and the girls. He hoped he wouldn't mind it, now he was going to make it right; he hoped the families would be as sociable as ever after this; and his women hoped the same. He wasn't

"flush," he said, just now; but he would pay half of the sum, with interest down to this time, in cash; and he would like to pay the rest off by his field lying back of the doctor's. The doctor closed with the offer; and had the papers drawn up that evening, as he said, laughing, "lest the crows should happen to fly away with his legacy, his bride, his nephew, and all his present eclat, in which case he foresaw that the new-born favor of the Boyntons would fly away without any help at all from the crows, or any other evil bird. But he must go!" and he hurried away, saying, "good day! good day, all!" as he went through the hall.

Laura and I have remarked a coldness and occasional sarcasm in the Misses Boyntons treatment of Laura, since her engagement to the doctor came out. The tide of prosperity setting in in his favor, has affected them, as well as the father. They were near carrying Laura off her feet yesterday, as we met in coming out of church. And the doctor's little girls, trying so hard to keep hold of Laura's reticule or gown, if her right hand must be retained in Adaline's all the way out—how charming they found the little girls! and what tempting offers of music, pictures, dogs and birds in porcelain, they held out to them, to induce them to promise that they would go and see them to-morrow, and stay all the afternoon! But—"oh! take your hair out of my face, Adaline!" said Jane, impatiently pushing back the long curls that fell about her face, as Adaline bent down for a good-bye kiss. Adaline blushed; I saw that she was angry with the child; but she forced a laugh, and patted Jane on the shoulder; which caress the girl parried by wheeling her shoulder away; and then, to be rid of all farther torment, she crossed over to Laura's other side, and clung to her gown as Clara already had possession of her left hand.

But no more of this on this beautiful morning. I shall sit here and hem the wedding cravat that we purchased at Concord for Henry. "It is rich, and delicate as pearl; but too light for him, now that he will be so pale. His face will need the reflection of stronger colors."

Evening.

A letter from young Boynton to-day, containing an offer of "his hand, his heart, his fortune." He flatters himself that he will be accepted. He thinks he saw that my feelings were quite favorable to him when he left, no longer than our acquaintance had been. It should have been protracted; he wished to remain longer at New London; but urgent business took him suddenly to Lowell on the day after the party. Had he been deceiving himself? Do not I feel that he is the one for me, even as he feels that I am the one for him? He hopes so. He will hope so until he hears from me.

He gave a postscript, in which, with a most bungling attempt at facetiousness, he informs me that he has made a great sacrifice to me of a whole box of Havannas. He hopes I will think as he does, that he deserves something for this.

If my answer proves favorable, he shall be with me on the very next day after its reception. &c.

Henry and I were sitting alone when it was brought in. I was quite stupefied by it at first, and sat holding it open in my hand, without speaking, or moving. But, at length, in answer to Henry's inquiring looks, I put the thing into his hands.

"Oh! this is too bad!" he exclaimed, with a look of pity, as soon as he found what it was.

I, on the contrary, although I regretted it unspeakably, thought it a just punishment of my folly.

I have answered in a few lines; respectfully, but decisively showing him that his hope is groundless, and must ever be. I hope that this will be an end of the matter between us, although I am willing that its remembrance abide with my conscience forever.

The doctor called to see Henry this evening, accompanied by his nephew, Augustus Cummings. He is a fine-looking man, with a noble form and gait, a broad, high forehead, and a kind voice and manner. He did not speak often; still when he left, it was with us as if he were the brother of us all.

"How good he is!" said Henry, breaking the silence that followed their departure. "I am glad that he has come; I am glad he will stay so long!"

There came a sad, yearning look to his eyes. I know he was thinking that he may stay to comfort and strengthen him in his last hours. He has not recurred to the subject of his death; but from some things he said to-day of the coming autumn, I know that he expects to fall with the leaf. I cannot think of this with any degree of resignation. I feel that if he were no longer here, I would no longer wish to be. But God knows what is best. If He takes him soon to the heavenly rest, we ought not to complain; for I know that the little song he hums so often when left alone, express the feeling of his heart. The dear one is "weary."

The 13th.

Augustus Cummings came this morning with a low, easy-going carriage to take Henry out to ride. They did not ride very far; but went slowly and were out some time. They were both very serious, but very cheerful also when they returned; and I thought I saw indications of recent emotion in them both. Henry loves the dishes that Aunt Agnes prepares for him; he walks about the house, and evinces a cheerful

interest in whatever is going on. This gives them all courage, in spite of the languor which so often betrays itself, and the cough that so often interrupts him in speaking; which will not let him laugh at all, or sing much above a whisper.

The 14th.

I have been with Laura since Monday. There were such a multitude of little things and great to be seen to, now that the time draws near when all must be ready!

Uncle George will be here at the wedding. Augusta is not well. She cannot come; but she earnestly begs that we will go to her, starting directly the ceremony is over; and we have promised, hoping at the time the invitation was accepted, that Henry would be well enough to accompany us. This is over now; he does not gain at all. On the contrary, I can see that he has failed in the few days that I have been away from him. He still rides every day with his friend; but not far; sometimes not more than a mile. Our grand-parents begin to feel alarmed; and to talk of his going home—"while he can," they added, after hesitating as if it were too painful to be spoken. The doctor, however, thinks it best for him to remain here for the present; and so do we all. The roads are more level, smoother here; and, on that account, he can ride longer in the air; besides, here he has Augustus Cummings with him almost constantly, reading to him now and then; talking in a strong, cheerful way with him of a great variety of things, among the rest of the Saviour, his sufferings, his glorious work here, and of "the excellent greatness" of his character. Henry seemed entranced with this theme. His eyes fill with tears; they did this evening as they talked; and after a little pause, in which his eyes beamed like an angels, he said, in loving tones, "the dear, dear Saviour."

He turns from me now to Augustus. He loves him better than any other human being. In one way this relieves me. If I must give him up, it will not be so intolerable a grief as if he were to cling to me, and look to me to the last.

The 15th.

I am disappointed. Another letter came to-day from Andrew Boynton, in which he presses his suit. The general character of the epistle is abjectly humble, although one detects, here and there, a kindling indignation. He seems to think that there can be nothing but cigar-smoke in the way of his acceptance; and accordingly assures me, in solemn phrase, that it has vanished from his atmosphere to return no more. See then how I am plagued by the very cigar-smoke which I hoped would help me so essentially. I fear I shall lose my patience, and let indignation work itself into my reply; but I hope not.

Henry has been spending the day at the doctor's; and, now that he has returned, his friend remains with him. We leave them a great deal together; for we can see that Henry desires it. He talks freely with him, I am convinced, of the great change he believes to be near. This none of us could bear with the calmness necessary to promote his own.

Monday, the 17th.

Next Sabbath morning will be the marriage, the baptism, and the sacrament. Henry wishes to say to the world that he loves the Lord Jesus Christ; and that he will strive to serve him; and is not willing that it be deferred until the next communion. It is the rule for candidates to apply earlier; but Mr. Webster and the church are glad to receive him as he asks. They are glad to take one so good, so young, so influential to their fold; and a great deal affected by the circumstances under which he resorts to it.

The 20th.

Henry's heart is not at all on the marriage. No; he cannot go to the altar with Laura; his friend must attend me. His friend must also stand with him at the baptismal font.

Uncle has come. He seemed greatly shocked at the sight of his son. In writing to him, the doctor and Laura have reported faithfully their impressions of his case; but these have been characterized more by hope than fear, until within the last week, in which time they have not written.

Uncle is a lofty, arbitrary man. He has always borne himself far above Henry; so that, as Henry acknowledged to me soon after I came, he has always stood in infinite fear of him. He has trembled before him, and felt himself less than nothing in comparison with him. On this account he has had no pleasure in the prospect of his visits; or only such as lay in the hope that, next time, he would be more manly and win upon his father's respect and love. Now this has passed. The love of a higher than any earthly parent fills his heart. With the new love for Him, there seems to have arisen an intenser love for us all. He is infinitely tender and affectionate toward us, and especially toward uncle, since he has let it be seen how much he suffers.

Sabbath Evening, Sept. 23rd.

The day is over; and I am worn out by it. I know not how Henry was sustained.

Not often are so many tears shed at a marriage, or a baptism. The pale, glorified look awed and overpowered us all; gave new solemnity to the rites, new significance to the consecrated symbols.

He does not appear fatigued. He speaks with perfect cheerfulness of the journey we will undertake to-morrow; seems to have not the slightest wish to detain or accompany us. Uncle will

remain with him. Henry tried to dissuade him from it; but I saw that he was grateful for his want of success.

Only the doctor and Laura, Augustus and myself will go on to Boston; although Uncle Harrison and aunt, Mr. Lane and his wife, the Websters, and others will accompany us in private carriages to Concord. We shall drive there all together. Our friends will return home at the same time that we take the cars for Boston. Augustus and I are to go with the married couple in Uncle Harrison's barouche; while uncle and aunt will follow in the doctor's chaise. Tom will drive over and take the barouche back.

I am glad at the thought of meeting Augusta and her husband and boy so soon. I am glad that uncle will remain with Henry, and that Henry is so strong and animated to-night.

Between all these things, I have the feeling that a dark cloud has gone; and that the morrow's sun will shine as it never shone before.

Saturday, October 6th.

That September morning came on bland and balmy as a day of June. How blue were the hills and mountains around! How dark and rich the woods! The birds sang; the air went through the trees, as, already habited for our journey, I stood at the door and listened, and looked abroad with Henry. How happy was Henry in all he saw and heard! With what quiet animation he pointed out one beauty after another to me. Gradually an expression of great sadness stole over his features.

"I sometimes think it hard to go so soon," said he, after a brief pause, in which tears filled his eyes. "The earth is so beautiful! there are so many dear ones here! But heaven is better! Heaven is better!" he added, with a brightening, a beaming glance upward. "It's the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away! You don't know, dear Caroline, how my mind lingers over these words, 'that fadeth not away!' I repeat it myself, as I lie awake through the night—'the inheritance that fadeth not away—that fadeth not away!'"

"I wish I were going as soon! for I, too, am longing for a home where things do not fade. I am sick of the earth!" I spoke passionately; for I thought of my parents, of Henry, of all the desolations of death, and of the approaching frosts and snows; and it really seemed to me that I could not live.

I shall never forget the look of mingled pity and upbraiding that Henry fixed on my face. "Oh, Caroline, don't say so! It is a glorious thing to live. I know of but one thing better than to live and do Christ's work on the earth, to suffer and to have faith in suffering. I see it so clearly what importance there is in the work

that Christ laid out for His followers, that I often long, long inexpressibly to stay and labor among men. There is so much suffering, Caroline! so much error and sin! There are so many to be benefited, to be saved! I think of what Channing said, 'one great thought breathed into a man may regenerate him, and long to live, that, as I go here and there, in all the social, all the business concerns of my life, I may breathe into men the great thoughts that shall regenerate them.'

"But I—I live such a poor life! and I shall suffer so much!"

"You, above almost every other one that I know, have the means of a good life—wealth, a benevolent, earnest temper, and a persuasive manner. And if you must suffer, Christ, also, suffered. Do as he has instructed you, my Caroline. Sit not down discouraged by the way, because directly before you a heavy cross lies in your path. Strive not to go round it; for this will take you out of the straight, narrow way; but go bravely on, thinking of Him who bore so much heavier burdens. Lift the cross, go on with it, and soon you will see lying a little beyond the bright crown of Christian triumph. The cross and the crown," added he, after looking out a moment at the carriages that were approaching the house, "remember, Caroline, the cross and the crown were united in Christ; they can never be sundered in us his followers."

It was the time appointed for the wedding party to meet here. It was only a few minutes after the first appeared, before we were all ready to enter the carriages.

Uncle George was courtly and attentive. Henry, cheerful and affectionate, accompanied us to the gate, shook hands with us all, kissed Laura, who had tears in her eyes, and seemed loth to let his hand go; but Uncle George said some lively thing and hurried us to the carriage.

"Good-bye, my friend," said Henry, again to Augustus Cummings, as we were taking the last look at him before starting. "Good-bye, girls; good-bye *all*." He waived his hand; those in the carriages waived theirs; Laura and I sent back kisses; and then we rode on, leaving him and uncle standing arm-in-arm looking after us.

We heard laughter and merry voices in the other carriages, long before the sadness occasioned by the parting was lifted from our hearts, so that we felt inclination to talk and look around us.

We had dined, and were in the midst of our leave-takings; and, already the long line of carriages belonging to the return-party, together with the coach which was to convey us to the cars, was drawn up before the American House, when a light, open buggy, and a horse reeking with sweat and foam, dashed up on the outside

of the line. Some of our party were already in the piazza; and a half dozen voices, full of terror, exclaimed, "James Bradley!"

We looked from the window just as he threw his reins, without speaking, to the ostler, and made his way through carriages and men to the piazza. His look was full of fear as he glanced from one to another, evidently dreading to speak. One moment it drove the blood back to our hearts and we were ready to faint; and then we hurried forward to catch the first word. This was what we all expected—"Henry Bradshaw—Henry is dead——"

What a shriek was that from Laura! what subdued cries and sobbings were heard through all that marriage party! Strong men were pale; many of them bowed their heads and wept.

As soon as the doctor could leave Laura, he went to the messenger and talked with him in low tones that we could not understand.

"Hemorrhage," said he, in reply to the looks that appealed to him, when he came back to us.

"I think from what James says that I couldn't have saved him if I had been there," said the doctor to Laura, as he again took her to him. "Dr. Sprague was with him in less than five minutes after he was attacked; and in a case like this he would do all that any one could."

This was good to hear. It seemed to relieve the doctor of a heavy burden.

"Now let us go back," said Laura, drawing herself up, and still speaking in sobbing breaths.

The large crowd attracted about the hotel by the melancholy circumstances, fell back in silence, and lifted their hats as if it were a funeral train filing away before them.

Oh, the long, long way back! the changed face of the sky and the earth! the mocking brightness of the sun, and song of the birds! for we could only think of the closed eyes, the deaf ears that so often had looked and listened with us, but could look and listen no more. I longed for the sky to be darkened, and for the cold tempest beating on my burning head.

In the midst of these gloomy feelings, Augustus said mildly and without looking at me, "it is a great comfort that he was so good, so willing to go." I did not reply; but I felt the truth of what he said. I went on thinking of his goodness, of his willingness, of his happy entrance upon the inheritance that fadeth not away, and a calmness came over me, a coolness; the distressing tension was gone from brain and limb; and I settled back among the cushions in peace.

Not one tear, not one sob from Uncle George and our grand-parents, as they stood and looked with us on the beautiful face of the dead; but their paleness, their weak voices and faltering steps, their compressed lips and heavy breathing

involved the struggles they were making for each other's sake, and for ours.

Poor Laura seemed as if it were more than she could bear. She flung her arms around the corpse, kissed the wax-like forehead; and immediately, shocked by the cold rigidity, flung herself into my arms with renewed sobbings.

"Oh, Caroline! Caroline!" said she, fixing agonized, beseeching looks on my face.

Strength from heaven went through me as I met that look, and felt her clinging to me, as if for comfort in her overwhelming despair. I put her hair back from her face, kissed her, and said, looking gently into her upturned face, "do you know, Laura, dear, did he tell you what beautiful words kept passing through his mind, in the day and in the night, giving him comfort?"

"What were they?" she asked, with interest.

"The inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away—that fadeth not away, Laura!"

"That is it! they are the words!" exclaimed grandmother, with glad tones; but now with tears streaming down her cheeks. "I couldn't recollect just what passage it was," added she, looking around on us all. "I only knew that they were Paul's words; and longed to remember them. He was looking so happy! it was just before the breath left him; and he kept murmuring something in a beautiful voice; it sounded so glad and happy! I put my ear down, and he was saying the words that you repeated. Caroline—and at last he kept repeating, 'that fadeth not away—that fadeth not away,' until he was gone."

Laura listened, looking from grandmother to me; she repeated the words after us, and the bitter agony passed.

The doctor put out his hand to lead her away. She went, calmly reflecting on what she had just heard; and, as the rest of us turned to follow them, I met in Augustus a look as if he too were grateful to me for the words of comfort.

The funeral services were held in the church, in consideration of the large multitude who would wish to be present. The pulpit was draped with black cloth, the heavy folds of which fell until they reached the pall, throwing into exquisite relief a small vase of the delicate white flowers and beautiful leaves of the low garden spiræa, which stood on the coffin.

Dear Henry's last, well-beloved words mingled in the anthem. There were faltering voices in the choir, at first, but, strengthened by the noble strains they sung, full of feeling for the living and for the dead, the notes rose clear and triumphant; and it was as if angelic voices, and Henry's among them, were assuring us anew of the inheritance that fadeth not away; so that we wept for him no longer.

Mr. Webster chose the same words as the starting-point of his remarks. He did not say much. He said, when he began that he *could not*; for he felt "as if a son, an own son lay there," pointing down to the coffin.

The house was filled; and they all wept, old and young; they all followed him to the grave, as if each one of that vast crowd had lost in him a brother, or a son.

THE FIRST BABY.

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.

My old schoolmate, Mary Thornley, had been married nearly two years, when I made my first call on her in her capacity of a mother.

"Did you ever see such a darling?" she cried, tossing the infant up and down in her arms. "There, baby, that's ma's old friend, Jane. She knows you already, I declare," cried the delighted parent, as it smiled at a bright ring, which I held up to it. "You never saw such a quick child. She follows me with her eyes all about the room. Notice what pretty little feet she has: the darling footsy-tootsies," and taking both feet in one hand, the mother fondly kissed them.

"It certainly is very pretty," said I, trying to be polite, though I could not see that the infant was more beautiful than a dozen others I had seen. "It has your eyes exactly, Mary."

"Yes, and da-da's mouth and chin," said my friend, apostrophizing the child, "hasn't it, precious?" And she almost smothered it with kisses.

As I walked slowly homeward, I said to myself. "I wonder if, when I marry, I shall ever be so foolish. Mary used to be a sensible girl."

In a fortnight I called on my friend again.

"How baby grows," she said. "Don't you see it? I never knew a child to grow so fast. Grandma says its the healthiest infant she ever knew."

To me it seemed that the babe had not grown an inch; and, to avoid a contradiction, I changed the theme. But, in a moment, the doting mother was back to her infant again.

"I do believe its beginning to cut its teeth," she said, putting her finger into the little one's mouth. "Just feel how hard the gum is there. Surely that's a tooth coming through. Grandmother will be here to-day, and I'll ask her if it isn't so."

I laughed, as I replied,

"I am entirely ignorant," I said, "of such matters; but your child really seems a very fine one."

"Oh! yes, everybody says that. Pretty, pretty dear." And she tossed it up and down, till I thought the child would be shaken to pieces: but the little creature seemed to like the process mightily. "Is it crowing at its mother? It's laughing, is it? Tiny, niny little dear: what a sweet precious it is." And, as at the last inter-

view, she finished by almost devouring it with kisses.

When I next called, baby was still further advanced.

"Only think," said my friend, when I had made my way to the nursery, where she now kept herself from morning till night, "baby begins to eat. I gave it a piece of meat to-day: a bit of real broiled beefsteak."

"What," said I, in my ignorance, for this did look wonderful, "the child eating beefsteak already?"

"Oh!" laughed my friend, seeing my mistake, "what a sad dunce you are, Jane! But wait till you have babies of your own. She says you eat beefsteak, darling," added the proud mother, addressing the infant, "when you only suck the juice. You don't want to choke yourself, do you, baby? Eat a beefsteak! It's funny, baby, isn't it?" And again she laughed, laughing all the more because the child, sympathetically, crowed in return.

It was not many weeks before the long-expected teeth really made their appearance.

"Jane, Jane, baby has three teeth," triumphantly cried the mother, as I entered the nursery. "Three teeth, and he's only three months old: did you ever hear of the like?"

I confessed that I had not. The whole thing, in fact, was out of my range of knowledge. I knew all about Dante in the original, and a dozen other fine lady accomplishments; but nothing about babies teething.

"Just look at the little pearls," exclaimed my friend, as she opened the child's mouth, "ain't they beautiful? You never saw anything so pretty, confess that you didn't. Precious darling," continued the mother, rapturously, hugging and kissing the child, "it is worth its weight in gold."

But the crowning miracle of all was when "baby" began to walk. Its learning to creep had been duly heralded to me. So also had its being able to stand alone, though this meant, I found, standing with the support of a chair. But when it really walked alone, the important fact was announced to me, in a note, for my friend could not wait till I called. Of course I lost no time in hastening to Mary.

"Stand there," she said to me, in an exulting

voice. "No, stoop, I mean: how can you be so stupid?" And, as I obeyed, she took her station about a yard off, holding the little fellow by either arm. "Now, see him," she cried, as he toddled toward me, and finally succeeded in gaining my arms, though, once or twice, I fancied he would fall, a contingency from which he was protected, however, by his mother holding her hands on either side of him, an inch or two off. "There, did you ever see anything so extraordinary? He's not a year old, either."

By this time I began to be considerably interested in "baby" myself. He had learned to know me, and would begin to crow whenever I entered the nursery; and I was, therefore, almost

as delighted as my friend, when, for the first time, he pronounced my name.

"Djane," he said, "Djane!"

His mother almost devoured him with kisses, in return for this wonderful triumph of the vocal organs; and when she had finished, I, in turn, smothered him with caresses.

I never, after that, smiled, even to myself, at the extravagance of my friend's affection for her baby. The little love had twined himself around my own heart-strings. How could I?

And now that I am a mother myself I feel less inclination still to laugh, as others may do, over that mystery of mysteries, a mother's love for her infant.

THE ANGEL AND THE CHILD.

FROM THE DANISH OF HANS ANDERSEN.

"Each time that a good child dies, an angel of God comes down to earth, takes the dead child in his arms, spreads abroad his large snow-white wings, flies forth over all those places which the child had loved, and plucks a whole handful of flowers, which he bears upward with him to the throne of God, that they may bloom there in yet greater loveliness than they had ever blossomed on earth. The good God folds all these flowers to His bosom, but upon the flower which He loveth best, He breathes a kiss, and then a voice is given to it, and it can join in the song of universal blessedness."

Lo, all this did an angel of God relate, whilst he bore a little child to heaven; and the child heard as if in a dream, and the angel winged his flight over those spots in the child's home where the little one had been wont to play, and they passed through gardens which were filled with glorious flowers.

"Which of all these shall we take with us, and plant in heaven?" asked the angel.

Now there stood in the garden a slender and beautiful rose-tree, but a wicked hand had broken the stem, so that its boughs hung around it withered, though laden with large half unfolded buds.

"The poor rose-tree!" said the child; "let us take it with us, that it may bloom above there in the presence of God."

And the angel took the rose-tree, and kissed the child because of the words it had spoken; and the little one half opened his eyes. They then plucked some of the gorgeous flowers which grew in the garden, but they also gathered the despised butter-cup, and the wild heart's-ease.

"Now then we have flowers!" exclaimed the child, and the angel bowed his head; but he winged not yet his flight toward the throne of God. It was night, all was still, they remained in the great city, they hovered over one of the narrow streets in which lay heaps of straw, ashes and rubbish, for it was fitting day.

Fragments of plates, broken mortar, rags, and old hats, lay scattered around, all which bore a uninviting aspect.

The angel pointed out in the midst of all this confused rubbish, some broken fragments of a flower-pot, and a clump of earth which had fallen out of it, and was only held together by the withered roots of a wild flower, which had

been thrown out into the street because it was considered utterly worthless.

"We will take this with us," said the angel; "and I will tell thee why, as we soar upward together to the throne of God."

So they resumed their flight, and the angel thus related his story:—

"Down in that narrow street, in the lowest cellar, there once dwelt a poor, sick boy; from his very infancy he was almost bed-ridden. On his best days he could take two or three turns on crutches across his little chamber, and that was all he could do. On a few days in summer, the beams of the sun used to penetrate for half an hour to the floor of the cellar; and when the poor boy sat there, and let the warm sun shine upon him, and looked at the bright red blood flowing through his delicate fingers, as he held them before his face, then it was said of him, 'he has been out to-day.' A neighbor's son used always to bring him one of the young boughs of the beech tree, when it was first budding into life, and this was all he knew of the woods in their beauteous clothing of spring verdure. Then would he place this bough above his head, and dream that he was under the beech trees, where the sun was shining, and the birds were singing. On one spring day, the neighbor's son also brought him some wild flowers, and among these there happened to be one which had retained its root, and for this reason it was placed in a flower-pot and laid upon the window-sill quite close to the bed. And the flower was planted by a fortunate hand, and it grew and sent forth new shoots, and bore flowers every year; it was the sick boy's most precious flower-garden—his little treasure here on earth—he watered it, and cherished it, and took care that the very last sunbeam which glided through the lowly window, should shine upon its blossoms. And these flowers were interwoven even in his dreams—for *him* they bloomed, for *him* they shed around their fragrance and rejoiced the eye with their beauty; and when the Lord called him hence, he turned, even in death, toward his cherished plant. He has now been a year with God, a year has the flower stood forgotten in the window, and now it is withered, therefore has it been thrown out with the rubbish into the street. And this is the flower, the poor withered flower which we have

added to our nosegay, for this flower has imparted more joy than the rarest and brightest blossom which ever bloomed in the garden of a queen."

"But how comest *thou* to know all this?" asked the child whom the angel was bearing with him to heaven.

"I know it," replied the angel, "for I was myself the little sick boy who went upon crutches. I know my flower well."

And now the child altogether unclosed his eyes, and gazed into the bright glorious countenance of the angel, and at the same moment they found themselves in the Paradise of God, where joy and blessedness forever dwell.

And God folded the dead child to His heart,

and he received wings like the other angel, and flew hand-in-hand with him. And all the flowers also God folded to His heart, but upon the poor withered wild flower He breathed a kiss, and a voice was given to it, and it sang together with all the angels which encircled the throne of God; some very nigh unto His presence, others encompassing these in ever widening circles, until they reached into Infinity itself, but all alike were happy. And they all sang with one voice, little and great; the good, blessed child, and the poor wild flower, which had lain withered and cast out among the sweepings, and under the rubbish of the fitting day, in the midst of the dark, narrow street.

DEATH AND SLUMBER.

FROM THE GERMAN OF KRUMMACHER.

In brotherly embrace walked the Angel of Sleep and the Angel of Death upon the earth.

It was evening. They laid themselves down upon a hill not far from the dwelling of men. A melancholy silence prevailed around, and the chimes of the evening bell in the distant hamlet ceased.

Still and silent, as was their custom, sat these two beneficent Genii of the human race, their arms entwined with cordial familiarity, and soon the shades of night gathered around them.

Then arose the Angel of Sleep from his moss grown couch, and strewed with a gentle hand the invisible grains of slumber. The evening breeze wafted them to the quiet dwelling of the tired husbandman, enfolding in sweet sleep the inmates of the rural cottage—from the old man

upon the staff, down to the infant in the cradle. The sick forgot their pain; the mourners their grief; the poor their care. All eyes closed.

His task accomplished, the benevolent Angel of Sleep laid himself again by the side of his grave brother. "When Aurora awakes," exclaimed he, with innocent joy, "men praise me as their friend and benefactor. Oh! what happiness, unseen and secretly to confer such benefits! How blessed are we to be the invisible messengers of the Good Spirit! How beautiful is our silent calling!"

So spake the friendly Angel of Slumber.

The Angel of Death sat with still deeper melancholy on his brow, and a tear such as mortals shed, appeared in his large dark eyes. "Alas!" said he. "I may not, like thee, rejoice

in the cheerful thanks of mankind; they call me upon earth their enemy and joy-killer."

"Oh! my brother," replied the gentle Angel of Slumber, "and will not the good man, at his awaking, recognize in thee his friend and bene-

factor, and gratefully bless thee in his joy? Are we not brothers, and ministers of one Father?"

As he spake the eyes of the Death Angel beamed with pleasure, and again did the two friendly Genii cordially embrace each other.

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THE FORTUNE IN THE TEA-CUP.

BY SMITH JONES, JR.

ONE evening, at tea, I saw my wife give her tea-cup a whirl, and then attentively regard the grounds in it.

"What's that, my dear?" I said. "Not telling your fortune in the tea-cup?"

Mrs. Jones looked confused for a moment. But when I began to laugh, she bridled up.

"You men think yourselves very wise," she said, "and laugh at such things. But, for all that, I have known many a fortune told in a tea-cup. In fact," here she hesitated, and blushed again; but then went on quickly, "in fact I first knew I was to marry you, by consulting a tea-cup."

"Indeed!" cried I, my skepticism quite staggered. "How was it, my dear?"

"Just like you men," she answered, triumphantly, "full of curiosity, though you say we women have it all." And, with these words, she composedly lifted the tea-pot, filled her cup, and went on tantalizingly with her meal, in silence.

"Now, my dear," I began, coaxingly.

"Now, Mr. Curiosity," she retorted, archly.

As the children had been put to bed at dusk, according to custom, and there was no one else by, I rose from my seat, crossed over to Mrs. Jones, put my arm around her neck, and kissed her.

"Well, well," she said, crimsoning like a young girl, and evidently gratified, "you are a tease, Smith: I suppose I must; so sit down and behave yourself." And she rearranged her collar with considerable display.

"You remember when I lived with Uncle Joshua and Aunt Sarah," she began, at last, after this was finished.

"Of course, my love," I replied, "who could forget your uncle's venerable pig-tail? No offence, I hope. You must own that he was rather an odd-looking fish."

"He was a good uncle to me," said my wife, with a touch of sadness in her rebuking voice.

"He took me when I was an orphan and maintained me till I married you."

I made my peace again by a kiss. I am afraid my young lady readers will think me very rude for it; but nevertheless, truth must be told. And now my wife proceeded.

"Well, the very night after the great sleighing party, on which I was introduced to you, and when, if you remember, you *would* dance with me so often, even to the neglect of Patty Walker, your partner, Cousin Jane was joking me about it, as we washed up the tea-things. Uncle was sitting by the fire, and aunt beside him, so that we thought no one heard us; but, all at once, aunt, who had ears like a cat, rose and came toward us. 'What's that I hear?' she said, 'Sary Ann got a new beau? Well, I declare, never was such a girl, she has twenty sweethearts where I had one.' You know, Smith, how jealous you used to be!"

"Pshaw," said I, "how you women imagine things."

"Jane up and told her all about it," continued my wife, a little crest-fallen, "and when she had concluded, Aunt Sarah took one of the cups, and said, 'I'll tell your fortune, Sary Ann, in the good, old-fashioned way: there's nothing like tea-grounds, they're sov'r'in, my child.' With that she whirled the cup around, and when she had done, held it to the candle, all three of us looking in. 'See them leaves close together,' she said, 'that means that danger is near. It's the danger of your driving your lover away by flirting, my dear,' she continued. 'But here's a clear path, winding through a dark wood, with no stalks to cross it: that promises fair! And a ring, too, which means a marriage.' And with these words, she pushed her spectacles up from her nose, and, looking at me, said, 'it's as clear as daylight, Sary Ann, you're to marry this new beau, and be both happy and rich, unless you prove your own enemy, by flirting with other

sweethearts. That flirting's the danger that is threatened. If it is safely got over, all the rest's fortune.' She raised her voice at these words, which woke up uncle, who had been taking a nap. He growled out, 'now, wife, don't be making a fool of yourself and the girls, by telling fortunes: I declare you women are dunces any how, or you wouldn't believe in such stuff.' So we had no more that night. But you know, Smith, I did marry you; and you know that, once or twice, what you called my flirting had nearly broken everything between us; and so I have good reason to believe in telling fortunes with tea-cups, haven't I?"

What could I say? Should I outrage the affectionate creature, by telling her that I doubted her conclusions, though I fully admitted her premises?

"And besides," she added, with a look that reminded me of our days of courtship, "I have been both rich and happy ever since. Richer than I ever expected to be, in my most romantic moments, for uncle and aunt were poor, as well as old-fashioned, and living away off in the country as they did, neither Jane nor I had always what others considered merely necessary comforts.

However, uncle and aunt did for us all they could," she added, a tear coming into her eye.

"They were excellent people," I said, drawing closer to my wife; and ashamed of myself for having ever laughed at the cue of the one or the cap of the other. "I love them for your sake."

A grateful look was my reply, and hiding her head on my breast, my wife proceeded,

"And then, as aunt prophesied, I have been so happy too. You bear with my faults so kindly, Smith; and besides, I am not strong and cost you a great deal of money; you might, perhaps, have been happier if you had married a healthier, better wife——"

Her tears were now flowing fast. But they were tears of joy more than of sorrow. I kissed her forehead fondly, resolving never again to find fault, even in my own heart, with her. I should be a sad dog, I thought, if I did.

I am not convinced, even to this day, that fortunes can be read in the dregs of a tea-cup. I should be very sorry, too, if my friends knew that Mrs. Jones thinks so; for they would consider it a weakness. But I, who know her better, can make allowances. She is an excellent creature, is Mrs. Jones, in spite of her tinge of fatalism!

WAS SHE RIGHT?

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

BY REV. H. HASTINGS WELD.

MANY apologise for their errors and even for crimes by saying that they cannot resist temptation; that they have nothing left to live for; that they cannot recover themselves, or resume their old position. Therefore they persist in evil, and court debasement. They fall into a mood of "despair which is not *quite* despair;" for it is largely composed of indolence, and largely of love for the very degradation in which they are revelling. It is a contempt for the world, and a hugging of disgrace. The contempt is akin to that of Reynard, for as the fox despised the fruit he could not reach, the sunken rouse contemns the good fame which he thinks he cannot hope for. And the clinging to degraded associates is prompted by love for their low praise. The broken down scholar and former gentleman, partakes amid his companions in the kennel of the character of Milton's Satan. He seems not less than a gentleman ruined; and meaner convives, admiring his acquirements, pay a court to him which feeds his vanity, and secures his companionship.

There was hanging about New York, a few years ago, a person of this class and description. We shall not specify dates, or too closely narrate facts, lest the portrait should be recognized. He was an accomplished scholar, and thoroughly educated. Ambition had spurred him through his collegiate course, and a genuine love for erudition made him regard it not only as a means to obtain an end, but as a delightful pursuit in itself, independent of any future advantage it might confer; though of the latter he was not unmindful.

Wilson—we must give him a name and will borrow this—graduated with dangerous distinction. We have either heard or read the remark recently, that the highest honors to a young man prove oftentimes a perilous success. So was it in his case. He was doubly unfortunate from being not only distinguished with the faculty, but popular with the students in his University. To no one would they more cheerfully have awarded the palm than to him, had the decision been made by a popular vote. Common consent conceded it to him as "the best fellow." Universal congratulation greeted him in his success, and he left the college precincts with the impression

that this world was a very pleasant one, in which fortune and fame are readily to be mastered by a man who had graduated with such honor.

In this pleasant humor with himself and with the world, he was tossed without experience into the whirlpool of New York. He brought an abundant capital of self-complacency and confidence in his own capacity and acquirements. He was inordinately fond of praise, no matter from whom it came. Even his mother's faithful old servant woman, who had known him from a boy, and admired him before he was clad in trousers, could add to his complacency. Her prophecy that "he would make a spoon or spoil a home," rung in his ears through the first stage. He felt sure of his destiny; and did not admit the alternative clause of the good woman's oracular giving out. He was confident of success. He always had been first, and why not continue so?

Of course he left behind him a "young attachment." Here would be an excellent point to introduce one of our theories—but we spare the reader, only suggesting that the activity of the American people, and their early developed lives, arise in no small degree from their habit of early marrying. The great stake in life, a house and a home are always within reach. The student sees his modest establishment at the end of his professional course. The apprentice's "freedom suit" is a double one—for self and wife. But we must not digress.

Wilson was a little chagrined that the young woman who was his choice, and who had acknowledged as a modest maiden might, her preference for him, did not share in his rosy dreams of the future. He even doubted her affection sometimes because she would neither condescend to flatter him, nor exhibit that delight in his youthful successes which he thought their importance warranted. Nor had she that unbounded confidence in his future which he himself entertained. Ellen was not devoid of affection; but enthusiasm in her prudent character waited for feats accomplished. She could not, like Wilson, triumph in anticipated success, nor would she consent to share his wealth and his laurels, until he had procured the one, and earned the other. In the buoyancy of his spirits he would have married at once—or appointed a very early day for the

union. But Ellen calmly smiled down his eager haste. She puffed away his castles in the air with a very gentle breath—but that breath was laden with doubts. A Swiss cottage does not perish more suddenly under an avalanche, than a sanguine boy's air castles crumble under a prudent woman's hesitation. So Wilson vowed that a man's mother and his affianced are the very last ones to discover his true value, and determined to repair at once to New York—there to "achieve greatness," and return forthwith to thrust it upon all connected with him. His widowed mother entreated—but a son can always reason a fond mother down. Ellen cried—but Wilson did not know it.

So see him in New York. His first duty was "to make friends"—or, more correctly speaking, acquaintances. In this there was no difficulty. Companions can be found anywhere by one who has the disposition to seek them. But true and judicious friends are of slow acquisition. They are to be proved and chosen out of many circles, and a preference on each side is necessary to real friendship. Wilson fell into a common error among young men who aspire to a professional life. He esteemed mere popularity over professional industry. But his eyes were at length opened, when he discovered that those who drank his wine carried their business to men who offered no wine to their clients. He labored to shine in society, and succeeded—succeeded to a marvel. For his admirers elected him to grace their evening parties, and divert their guests with the sallies of a lively wit. And thus they did, while with a wonderful perversity of taste they were perhaps closeted in the library with some dry old mummified Coke and Blackstone, whom no lady would think of entertaining. Wilson's legal knowledge was certainly available for something. He could cheerfully impart it, in the way of a colloquial dissertation, or a mock argument after dinner—all unsuspecting that he was giving advice without a fee, in a bona fide case, while he fancied that he was only arguing a feigned issue, to show his knowledge.

A year or two passed. Wilson had not yet returned to claim his bride. Nor had he made that settlement upon his mother, which he had promised, and verily intended to perform. Nor had he established such a fame at the bar, as would compel him to refuse clients. Business he had certainly—for he was "a good fellow," and his friends could engage him without the formality of a retaining fee. To many that was a convenience of which they did not fail to avail themselves. Trifles should not part friends, and the aggregate of "trifles" which stood to Wilson's credit was no small sum. It might have become even larger, but his time was so much taken up

with the concoction of repartees, the invention of impromptus, and the reading up, necessary to the persiflage of the dinner-table and the soiree, that even his "friends" ceased to entrust him with the gratuitous management of their business.

Wilson was not blind to his danger. He found himself involved. He often shuddered, and felt almost in despair when "extra soda" would not remove the last night's headache. He became a man of evasions, and excuses. He grew very polite to his tailor and his shoemaker. Even his laundress was won by his politeness; and his civil attentions to his landlady and her daughters were most suspicious in the eyes of the experienced. He was in a predicament which he dared not look in the face; and he could only find momentary relief by postponing reflection until after the next display of his brilliant powers—for which he *must* prepare. But the next only introduced another. And the next, another. At first he was choice in his amusements. Now he had descended to less elite gatherings. His star declined.

"Capital fellow in conversation that Wilson," said a gentleman, at an evening party.

"Yes," said the man addressed. And then in a whisper—"bought his note to-day, fifty per cent off."

"Will it do?"

"For a while yet. He can hold on to his set a little longer. When he can't, I'm done discounting."

That time soon came. Wilson made an effort for a small political appointment, failed, was in debt and desperate. Invitations grew fewer. His coat was first two or three fashions old—then seedy. He discontinued his patronage of a Broadway hatter, and "cordonnier," and consented to be hatted and booted, and boarded on the "Canal street plan"—for alas! fine words could postpone his board bill no longer!

What could he do now? "It is always darkest just before day," he said. "Now I'll marry, and be settled, and grow rich. No more dissipation for me!"

And it was his honest purpose. He tried it—for a whole week. He absolutely attended to the little business that remained to him, and found it quite a refreshing excitement to do something—which he certainly could, if he tried. He renewed his home correspondence which he had lately neglected, and delighted his indulgent mother with his filial attention. He wrote to Ellen, and received cautious but not unkind replies—cautious, for she had her misgivings—kind, for her heart yearned to him. The week wore round to a month, and the month to two, and Wilson, who had in a measure ceased his high flights of expectation, was really beginning to make some progress, and felt the solid satisfaction which

work accomplished always confers. He thought he had bought wisdom at a high price, and determined to turn his investment to account. A few months more passed, and he felt now quite a made man. His ambition had found, he thought, its legitimate channel. He would labor and by success shame his false friends.

But he wanted sympathy. He had reasoned himself into a sort of Ishmaelitish position, and commenced suits with a fierce pleasure against sundry of his summer friends; for Wilson was not the only one whom the social wheel had overturned. He needed a true friend; and remembered that part of his plan of reformation was marriage. He wrote to Ellen a letter, which, did we dare to print, it would be admitted unparalleled among love-letters. He acknowledged his past wanderings in the superlative degree of humiliation, and promised for the future on the hyperbole of expectatance. He denounced the world in general, and New York in particular, in the most approved exaggeration of misanthropic out-givings, and magnanimously invited Ellen to demonstrate her affection and share a bower of thorns with him.

Having sealed and despatched his letter, he could not help looking for "houses to let" as he passed along the streets. Any street would do now; for he was determined to trust no more to the factitious aid of connexion and position, but rise to eminence on his own merits. He had grown bolder in his hopes since he first modestly began to amend; for a very little success served to intoxicate him. And he was confident that Ellen would at once accept his overtures. He was not sure that she would not even come to him in New York, if the colder prudence of friends objected to their union. He was all impatience when the return of the mail brought no reply, and when many mails came, and still no answer he grew furious.

The postman brought him a letter, after he had ceased, in his vexation his daily inquiries. He took it eagerly, and locked his door upon the retreating functionary. He looked a moment or two at the direction before he dared to break the seal. It was in the same orderly neat hand in which all her letters were directed. There was no haste, no agitation. The *i* in the Wilson was carefully dotted, the "Esq." was faultless, and the "New York" was geometrically correct in its corner position.

He broke the seal.

And he read a calm and positive, but mild refusal, which, while it did not forbid hope in the future, did not encourage it. Wilson was petrified with amazement. "It is her guardian's work," he said, at length. "I don't doubt he dictated it." But he looked again and found

that gist of a lady's epistle—a postscript. And in that Ellen begged him, if he loved her, as he had often assured her, to keep his own secret. She had consulted no one—she had not made any third party a confidant. This she owed to his affection.

But this, he thought, and very naturally was the unkindest cut of all. He unlocked the door, admitted a client whose knock had startled him from his reverie, talked with forced composure, but advised most bellicose proceedings against the other party. He was ready for war with every thing human. Even the litigant was astonished, and deferred farther proceedings.

Wilson sallied out. The streets were full of life and light. Nobody seemed to him to have any grief or any vexation save himself. He was angry with all the world, and plunged—

Neither into the East River nor the North, but into the watch-house! That was the end of his night's adventures.

It so chanced that the examining magistrate knew our hero, and he was dismissed without public exposure. But it was, notwithstanding a disgrace, which was but the commencement of many. He had been familiarized with another degree of descent in the social scale. Thenceforward all days were dark with him. His pride of reformation from fashionable and respectable (?) dissipation sustained him no longer. He became the hale fellow well met of low companions. In a word, he was the man whom we had in view in the commencement of this sketch—the man who could do better if he would—but who would not. He was the admiration of low wits, the bright, particular star of tippling house caucuses; the small lawyer who defended small causes, and brought petty actions, and who received even less respect from the magistrates than the defendants whom he represented. There was at several times serious purpose of degrading him from the bar—but he was "such a good fellow!" He was despised and endured, and men far his inferiors in intellect and acquirements looked on him with pity.

Of course such a man could keep no secrets, and it soon came to be understood that Wilson was ruined by a "hopeless passion." His affianced had discarded him, and he was ruined by the disappointment. The reader knows how far this was true. And while those who saw the wreck of the once polite and accomplished man pitied him, and condemned her, we ask, "was she to blame?" Is the woman who refuses to share the fortunes of a man whose principles she distrusts, and whose character she deems unstable, to be held to answer for his follies and vices? And have we a right to condemn her for not rushing heedlessly into the misery which his subsequent conduct shows

him capable of producing? These are grave questions. More than one woman has had them to consider. More than one has listened to sentiment rather than sense; and most who have done so have bitterly rued it. The discovery is made too late that he who is so weak that one disappointment may ruin him, only postpones ruin by marriage, and involves wife and children in the same misery. Men must do well and avoid evil from higher motives than any mortal's favor or disapproval, or the ground of their virtue is but a moral quick-sand.

It is not our purpose to follow Wilson step by step on his downward path. Suffice it to say that he reached the lowest depth to which he could descend, short of technical guilt. His moral delinquencies did not take the form of theft or absolute breach of trust. He was guilty of no petty larceny, and if he had unpaid debts, he never saw the hour when he would not have paid all—if he could. But he could not, and the inability arose from his own misconduct. We leave casuists to decide how far such delinquency is above such offences as the law takes cognizance of.

Wilson one day received a letter, the first for many months, perhaps a year from his old residence, for even his mother had despaired of him. He knew the hand. It was a thick parcel. He thought of a remittance—but his stomach heaved at the possibility, and he was predetermined to return it, as some shadow of his former pride returned to him. He opened the parcel. It contained only his own curious and passionate letter of proposals to Ellen. He looked in vain upon margin and envelope for any communication. Nothing was there but his own letter. He read that, and, at first, accused Ellen, as he had done many times before, of his own misconduct. Presently his thoughts took a more considerate and profitable channel. He asked himself whether, had he married, he should not have fallen into the same evil courses. And he could not—though he strove to do so—answer this question to his own satisfaction. And he asked again, which was more to the purpose, why he should remain an outcast still.

Providence favored him. "Wilson!" he heard himself addressed, as he sauntered along. He turned almost in surprise, to hear the voice of a gentleman. The communication which the other desired was soon made. He had authorities to consult and cite, facts and evidence to arrange and collate—in short, a case to prepare of some importance. "Now I know," he continued, "that you could manage this thing better than I; and besides I am crowded with business. Will you do it for me?"

Two hours before he would have refused. Now

he undertook it—if not cheerfully, at any rate faithfully. One employment led to another, and a few weeks produced a new reformation—a change which we are glad to believe is permanent. The best evidence is in his renewed attention to his mother. He frequently corresponds, and occasionally visits her. Another sign of strength is that he never refers to his past irregularities, and never has taken up the too common course of recounting his former misdeeds, as an evidence of what depth a man may reach, and still recover; for he walks with fear and trembling. But the world is still before him. He is once more in the practice of his profession; and as many years have elapsed since his last fall, few with whom he now meets ever think of it. Few indeed remember it. And we think that he has discovered the value of the religious principle as the regulator of human conduct, and learned where lies that higher strength than is contained in human resolutions and human pledges.

Again we ask was Ellen right? For there is still another point in her conduct to consider. She is now a maiden lady, past the bloom and the romance of youth. She looks upon life with older and with sadder eyes than when Wilson's glowing language painted the joint future which they never have realized. Mothers are full of hope, and Wilson had little difficulty to persuade his to attempt to reopen an acquaintance for him. The mother's chief demur was against giving Ellen again an opportunity which she once refused—to the ruin, as the mother thinks, of her son. But she undertook the mission, prepared to blame Ellen gently for the past, when she had accepted him for the future. But she had not the opening for such a reproof. Ellen declined to open a wound anew which never could be wholly healed. She was past the hope and freshness of life, she said, and the danger she dared not tempt in her youth, she could not now.

"I hope," said the mother, "this will not prostrate my noble boy again!"

"And so do I, for his sake and for mine—for his for the regard I bear you both—for mine for the grief I should feel in his degradation. But I still think that if I can ruin him as I am—I certainly should as his wife. But I feel that by doing what I have done I have saved rather than injured him. It is easier to rise alone, than to lift up another with you. I dare not trust my life with a man whose resolution has proved so little able to cope with temptation."

There the question still stands—"was she right?" Mothers of daughters will say aye. Mothers of sons, and we suspect some daughters, full of the idea of their own influence, and of the power of their charms of person and of mind will

say nay. But it is a problem which none should be in haste to solve experimentally. -There is a deal of false reasoning, and more false sentiment about this matter of love and matrimony abroad in the world; and common sense is the best guide after all. Of course duty is paramount, and we speak of common sense as the interpreter of duty. Poor Wilson!

But how, after all if he did marry her, could he look her in the face; and how could she respect him?

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"I KNOW IT."

BY E. W. DEWEES.

At seventeen years of age I was more of a man than I have ever been since. I wore a long-tailed coat and boots, (to which the appertunance of spurs was generally added) a moustache was quite visible on my upper lip, and a consciousness of ripe maturity never left my mind. I was studying for the legal profession, but at the time of which I write, was spending my summer vacation at my father's house in the country.

Though so manly, (almost soldier-like, as I fancied,) in my appearance, my *inner* was by no means so stern as my *outer* man. I loved my mother with childish tenderness, and sooner than pain her pious heart, I unobtrusively accompanied her every Sunday to the village church, to listen to long sermons of which I could not hear a word, for the tremulous accents of the very aged minister, who conducted the services, were so faint as to be inaudible where we sat. Though incited by love and duty to subject myself to this weekly penance, (well deserved by my weekly sins) my conscience yet did not prevent me from whiling away the time by such amusement as lay at hand—that, namely, of observing and speculating on the countenances of my neighbors, an occupation of which I was fond.

The physiognomy which interested me more than all others, was that of a young girl who sat not far from us, and who was accompanied by an aged lady, probably her grandmother—the object of her ever-watchful care. This girl's face, from first eliciting my careless admiration, gradually absorbed my whole attention. It was very beautiful, but apart from that, it possessed the greatest possible interest for me. Never had I seen a countenance which denoted so much sensibility; each emotion of her mind was plainly written upon it, by its quick, delicate changes; nothing was wanting but the key of a corresponding degree of sensibility in the beholder, to read her tender, innocent soul like an open book. For hours I gazed, and speculated on that fair young face—I thought how sad would be the lot of so sensitive a being, should fate unite her to one who would not know how to read aright what was so delicately written—to whom the varying expression of that sweet countenance would be but a blank—who should be able to see in it only its coarser part—beauty of feature. There was no end to the reveries into which those swift-coming blushes led me.

Sometimes, by chance, the fair object of my busy fancies would catch my eye, or, without looking at me, seem to know or feel that I was gazing at her, and I wickedly delighted in noting the blush which deepened on her cheek till I withdrew my eyes.

One Sunday I happened, in coming out of church, to be close to my lovely neighbor—immediately behind her—my hand actually touched her unconscious garments. I felt an irresistible desire to force her in some way to notice me—to speak to her—to occasion one of those charming blushes—anything—I knew not what. In short, like an impertinent coxcomb as I was, I stooped forward, and with an insufferable insolence, which I blush now to remember, I whispered in her ear,

"You are very pretty!"

Never was I more surprised, than when she calmly replied,

"I know it!"

I was absolutely startled. I had expected a silent, conscious blush—an indignant glance—anything rather than this cool, "I know it."

I was puzzled, but I had plenty of time to turn the matter in my mind, for in a few days I returned to college. I can truly say it was the one problem, which, throughout the term, gave me most trouble to solve, and cost me most thought.

Another year elapsed ere I returned home, and again sat in the little village church. My personal appearance was, meanwhile, somewhat altered. I still wore my moustache, it is true, but my coat tails were not, or did not seem quite so long, and I had left off my spurs.

My mother and I were early seated in our pew, and I impatiently waited for the arrival of my lovely enigma. I tried to prepare myself for disappointment. "I have been thinking and dreaming about an ideal," I said to myself—"doubtless when the young lady herself appears, all my fine imaginings will vanish—there can be no doubt my fancy has been playing tricks with me, investing a mere country maiden with transcendent graces and charms." While I was reasoning thus with myself, the young lady appeared leading her old relative with tender care.

Worshipping an "ideal," indeed! my most charming remembrance did not begin to do justice to the beautiful reality. A soul full of tenderness and sensibility seemed to have found

a fitting home in a person and face of perfect loveliness and grace.

She blushed when, looking round, she chanced to see me, and again the play of expression on her features which had so interested me formerly, charmed me.

The more I studied her face the more I seemed to see into the pure depths of her soul. I could have staked my life on her noble purity of thought and deed.

As we returned home, I described my fair neighbor, and asked my mother who she was.

"Her name," my mother said, "is Grace Denny; and she is the loveliest—the most *superior* young woman I have ever in my whole life met with. It is too soon to think of such things yet," she continued, smiling, "but some years hence it would make me happy to see my dear son married to just such a woman."

"Not quite so fast, mother," said I, laughing a good deal to hide a little boyish embarrassment which I was most anxious to conceal.

I found that Grace had become a constant visitor at my mother's, and I did not fail to improve the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with her.

She was indeed a gifted creature, endowed with all "nature's best." She sang, she danced, she conversed with an indescribable grace peculiar to herself. Though generally thoughtful and earnest in her demeanor, she had a vein of quiet humor, and her strokes of playful drollery charmed all the more from being unexpected. But more alluring to me than all her gifts and accomplishments, was the shrinking sensibility depicted on every feature of her sweet face. I soon found myself deeply—painfully interested in her. I say *painfully*, for Grace received my assiduous attentions with a perfect coolness and unconcern which gave me great uneasiness. Sometimes I thought she remembered my early impertinence, and was disposed to punish it. But there was a rival, a cousin of Grace's, who always stood in my way, and from whom Grace received, as a matter of course, numberless little attentions which I dared not even offer. I hated this man; I was insufferably jealous; but Grace seemed either perfectly unconscious, or perfectly indifferent to the by-play of animosity which was carried on between us.

Grace, sweet, noble Grace, with her child-like simplicity and sensitive woman's heart—who could resist her? I could not—my whole soul was hers. In vain had I struggled—in vain had I called upon my vanity, (of which I had plenty to invoke) to save me from the mortification of loving without return. I could not stem or control the passion which, strong as a mighty whirlwind, had seized me.

One evening I sat by the piano while Grace sang to me. The cousin was not there, and dear Grace's varying color and glistening eyes suggested sweet hopes to my vanity. I fancied I saw *love* in those bright dewy eyes, and on those soft music-breathing lips.

It was the last evening of my vacation, and surely I read a gentle, farewell thought in Grace's face. I was beside myself with joy at the idea—I was as if in a blissful dream—a sweet delirium—a rapture of love. As Grace rose to leave the piano I caught her hand, and, unable longer to repress the *one* thought that filled my heart, I exclaimed fervently,

"Grace—dear Grace, with all my soul I love you!"

She lifted her large, soft eyes, and said slowly, while a mischievous smile stole over her face,

"I know it."

She was gone before I had time to prevent it, or to recover from my surprise.

The next day I returned to college, expecting to complete my studies in another year. A year! how long a time to be absent from the beloved being who was to me, I felt, henceforth and forever, whether she returned my love or not, the nucleus round which all my thoughts would revolve. I need not say how often her strange and unsatisfactory answer tormented me. I perceived in her repetition of the same words, her remembrance of the time she had used them before; and this then was the just punishment for my insolence. I tortured myself by bringing the whole scene again and again to memory—my passionate declaration of love, and her provoking reply, "I know it." "The deuce you do!" thought I, sometimes, "I would I had possessed the wit to have left you a little more uncertain."

I often wonder that I was able to study at all at this time, for Grace, beautiful, *graceful* Grace, was never absent from my thoughts—she had become the dream of my life—the object of *all* the love sonnets, which had till now been scattered on various rival beauties. I *did* study, however, and study hard, and at the end of the term passed examination with high honor—much to my dear mother's pride and joy.

I determined to be wiser when I saw Grace again—to discover beyond a doubt if I were indeed beloved, before I committed myself as I *had* done by foolish speeches.

In order to satisfy myself on this point, and perhaps also to gratify a little pique, when I returned home I did not go immediately to see Grace as my feelings dictated, but waited till, at my mother's summons, she spent an evening with us. Even then, though my heart was full of tenderness for her, I affected coolness; I had made up my mind to play a part, and suffer as I might

I would act it out. There was a young lady staying with my mother at this time who dearly loved to flirt, I was quite ready to contribute to her amusement. I devoted myself to her the whole evening, and felt the sweetest pain I ever experienced when I saw, by Grace's dear, changing, sensitive face, that she was deeply pained and wounded.

When this foolery had been carried to its height, I perceived Grace suddenly rise, and step through the open window out on the piazza. In

a few minutes I followed her; she had retired to a little distance from the window, and stood with her head leaning against the railing weeping. Stealing softly behind her, I passed my arm around her, and whispered,

"Ah, dearest Grace—do not deny it! *You love me!*"

There was a little pause—then laughing, yet still half crying, Grace turned aside her head, and said—

"Alas! I know it."

THE OAKLEYS.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

CHAPTER I.

"LA me! Only to think of what I have seen this morning! Well, the meanness of some people is astonishing, I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Williams, as she threw herself into a luxuriously-cushioned arm-chair, and taking a handsome fan from a recess table near by, began to use it with the most commendable diligence: probably forgetting in her agitation that it was a cold January day, the extreme severity of which could scarcely be modified to a comfortable feeling by the glowing anthracite heaped within her friend's ample grate.

"My dear Mrs. Williams, what is the matter?" inquired the lady of the mansion; as she drew a tabouret beside her visitor, and seated herself in an attitude of profound curiosity and attention.

"Oh, nothing more than one might expect sometimes to meet with in this world, but it took me so by surprise—but, really, I don't believe I have yet asked after Mr. Lane and the dear children—but, you must excuse my absence of mind, indeed; I am so entirely overcome by my feelings;" and she betook herself again to the fan most zealously.

"They are all very well," replied Mrs. Lane; "but never mind them: only tell me what *can* have distressed you in this manner."

"Aye, distressed you may well say, Mrs. Lane; it is not often that I allow anything to affect me so much; but this was so astonishing—I was so completely amazed, that my nerves cannot recover from the shock."

"Well, if I ever learn the cause of your trouble, perhaps I may sympathize with you."

"Why, to be sure—here I am sitting all this time, and never yet told you of my wonderful discovery, after coming all this distance for no other purpose! Well, to begin. This morning, after breakfast, I said to sister Jane that as it was such a fine, clear day, we might as well take a walk out, and pay a few visits. But she only drew herself nearer to the fire, and declared it was too cold even to look into the street. Such folly! As if cold weather was not the most pleasant for a long walk. However, I could not persuade her to move, (she will be sorry enough when I go home and tell her what I saw) so I was obliged to come alone. 'Tis so disagreeable to be walking by one's self—but, you know, when once I think of doing anything, I am bound to accomplish it; and besides, I wanted to call on

Mrs. Dr. Oakley, (I have not seen her this some time) and see the new members of the family. Of course, you heard of the doctor bringing his two nieces here to be raised at his house, on account——"

"Oh, yes! I know all about that arrangement; a foolish one it is," interrupted Mrs. Lane.

"Foolish! Why, Mrs. Lane, 'tis the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of—perfectly absurd! I declare I felt quite sorry for Mrs. Oakley when I heard of it. To think of her being saddled with another person's children—spoiled ones, too, I dare say."

"But you have not told me the story, Mrs. Williams?"

"No, my dear, I'm coming to it presently. But as I said to Mr. Williams, I thought it was very odd for Dr. Oakley to throw the whole charge of his brother's children on his wife, merely because their mother chose to marry again—as if she was not still their mother. I would not consent to such a measure to please any man! But I don't pity Mrs. Oakley now—for I saw cause this morning to change my opinion of *her*: and I have no doubt that he had reasons of his own for wishing to have the children with him. Perhaps, poor man, he thought they might be some comfort. Don't you think so?"

"I'm sure, I can't tell," replied Mrs. Lane, rather coldly; for she began to think that her loquacious visitor would not soon satisfy the curiosity she had awakened. The latter observed this, and after a few more interlocutory remarks promised that she should now hear it all; and sitting upright and assuming quite a business-like air, she began:

"I decided, while dressing, that this would be as good a day as any to see the strangers; so I proceeded straight to Mrs. Oakley's. When I rang the bell, who should open the door but one of the very children I went to see! I knew her at once, she is so like her uncle—so I shook hands with her, and asked about her aunt. The little thing answered very sensibly for one of her age, (she cannot be more than five or six years old) but I suppose she was a little confused, for instead of showing me into one of the parlors, she ascended the stairs; and I was more than half way up, when she suddenly turned back, and said, 'oh, please walk into the parlor.' 'No, dear,' says I, 'tis not worth while—I will just

go with you to see your aunt for a few minutes.' You know such ceremony is needless between friends; for my part, I think it looks sociable to invite your particular acquaintances, sometimes, into your private sitting-room; (Mrs. Williams was one of those who like *sociability* everywhere, save in *their own houses*) but I soon discovered that in some cases it may be rather unpleasant. The child opened the door, and I entered. Good gracious—was ever any one so astonished. There was Mrs. Oakley, not as I expected to find her, nicely dressed, reading, or at some trifling work to pass away the time—but dressed in a common gingham wrapper, with linen collar and cuffs, her hair put up as plain as it was possible to; and there she sat on a low chair, the table opened to its full size, and covered with clothing just cut out, I suppose, for the children; for she had the sleeve of a little dress in her hand. The youngest child sat on a little stool beside her, learning her a b a b s from a primer laying on her aunt's lap. I declare I was so struck I could not move from the door. Mrs. Oakley looked rather surprised when she saw me, but she rose and spoke in a manner so unconcerned as to show that she was too much accustomed to work to blush at being detected in such an action. Then the little one who had opened the door went and took a seat near the window, and commenced running up the seams of a dress, or something of the kind. Only to think of it!"

"My dear Mrs. Williams, you shock me. To think that any of *our* associates should ever descend so low!"

"That was the thought that vexed me. But listen, there is worse coming. I had not been there long, when she begged to be excused a moment, and left the room. Directly she came back again. She done the same several times. The last time I asked little Fanny if they had company down stairs? She said no; but her aunt had just made some pies before I came, and they were now baking. I asked her what was the matter with the cook, but she did not seem to understand me, and just then the domestic lady returned, and I rose to come away. Now, don't you think I had cause to feel bad?" and the afflicted lady fell back in the arm-chair, almost sobbing with vexation. Her companion sat in a state of speechless horror, from which she at length recovered sufficiently to exclaim, in unmeasured terms, against such contemptible meanness.

"And then, too, condemning the poor child to work with her!"

"Yes," added Mrs. Williams, energetically. "A child, a mere babe, you may say, set to work like a woman; and the poor little one of two or three years poking her eyes out over her letters. A pretty way to bring up his brother's children

truly! They had better have remained with their mother—no step-father could treat them worse."

"Just to think—cook, seamstress, governess—for all we know chamber-maid into the bargain! So much taken from poor people who have no other way to earn a living—such conduct is shameful."

"Oh, it is infamous! And, oh, another thing. You remember the beautiful stove we all admired so much? Well, that has disappeared, and the sitting-room is now heated by a drum."

"One thing worse than another," replied Mrs. Lane. "But, you know," she continued, with the air of a mentor, "when the spirit of avarice takes possession of people, there is nothing too mean for them to stoop to. I hope you did not remain there long!"

"Not I, indeed! I felt like in a fiery furnace while I did stay. I felt so degraded—and I should have left sooner, only I saw that she was anxious to finish the dress she was working on. 'T was for little Margaret, I suppose; for the frock she had on was rather shabby. Fanny's looked quite new: some of the handiwork of her industrious aunt, of course. I was going to ask her about the mantua-maker she always employed, but then I thought it was not worth while."

"Perhaps not; though I should, if I were in your place: but has she learned dress-making?"

"I should not wonder if she did when a girl; for they say her mother is a queer sort of woman, and has odd notions about things. Well, I must go. I shall expect to see a sign neatly painted, 'Fashionable dress-making done here,' hanging at the doctor's door before long."

"In that case, I think I must be her first patron—will you be her second?" asked Mrs. Lane, sneeringly.

"I, certainly! And I will try to procure Mrs. Dawson, for the third, I am just going there now. I think we may easily secure a liberal share of public patronage for the industrious lady:" and with many more equally good-natured remarks, and as many "good-byes" and "farewells," the friends at length parted: the one to return into the house, and impatiently await the dinner hour, that she might communicate the wonderful news (with as many embellishments as she thought proper) to her assembled family—the other to hasten from house to house, circulating this new and interesting piece of gossip.

While these worthy ladies were thus honorably employed, we will form a more intimate acquaintance with the family which they have so unceremoniously obtruded upon our notice.

CHAPTER II.

EDWARD OAKLEY, at the age of twenty-three, found himself a graduate of one of the first

Medical Universities in the United States—a good share of knowledge in his head—a fund of warm and kindly affections in his heart—a diploma in his pocket, and the magical M. D. appended to his name—but, unfortunately, very little money in his purse to support his new dignity. But the young doctor added to all his other advantages, one which was more than sufficient to counterbalance the only weight in the opposite scale—he had a will, firm, strong and undaunted, ready to meet and conquer every difficulty that lay in his way; and when he could not overcome, at least, breast the storm cheerfully, in the hope of brighter days. All his friends prophesied for him a bright and prosperous career, and there was a voice within which echoed a ready response to their prognostications. But our hero, though thus sanguine, did not allow his bright dreams and pleasant anticipations to divert him from the only path that could ensure their realization. With his brilliant intellectual gifts was united that indispensable requisite for one in his circumstances, which, unfortunately, is seldom possessed, and still more seldom valued by men of genius—a prudential foresight which calculated the means necessary to the desired end, with an unconquerable determination to adopt those means, however repugnant to his present feelings. In one week from the period of graduating he had formed a plan for his conduct, and taken the preliminary steps toward putting it in execution. His only brother had for several years resided in a young, but flourishing town at some distance. Thither Edward resolved to travel, and by raising there, if possible, a class of young men wishing to learn the classical languages, or other branches in which he was proficient, earn the requisite sum to “start” him in his career. His project succeeded even beyond his hopes. In two years he had acquired sufficient means not only to authorize him in returning to his native city, but also to enable him to gratify a long-cherished desire of assisting his brother in his business, which, owing to several heavy losses, had greatly declined. Edward also felt keenly for his brother in other respects, which it was not in the power of money to relieve. The latter had married several years previous, and his domestic life was far from being happy. Allured by uncommon personal charms, he had thoughtlessly married, ignorant of the disposition or mental acquirements of the girl he had chosen; and he had the pain and mortification of finding that she was both unqualified and unwilling to contribute to his comfort and welfare. Fond of home and its pleasures, he sought in vain to find in his wife one who would share his simple enjoyments, and soothe his hours of trial; and his regret was the deeper when he found that

even a mother's holy cares were powerless to win her from the scenes of frivolity and amusement to which she was wholly devoted. Edward soon perceived his brother's unhappiness; but fraternal affection was unavailing here, and he could but hope that the enlargement of his business would occupy his time more fully, and thus partly relieve the desolation of his home.

Returned home, our young doctor took a neat office, which he fitted up handsomely, and commenced his professional career under bright and cheering auspices. Nor was he less fortunate in another matter. While yet a student, accident had introduced him to a lovely girl of sweet and graceful manners; and when, on nearer acquaintance, he ascertained that her mind was in no way inferior to her outward charms, he determined that she should be the future partner of his heart and home. He had never in words told her his intentions; but it is probable that “love's own interpreter,” the eye, had slowly betrayed him; for when on his return he sought to renew the acquaintance, the beautiful blush and smile with which he was welcomed, proved that two years of absence had not obliterated his remembrance from the mind of Ellen Atwood, nor caused her to regard him as a stranger. They were married. Mr. Atwood furnished the house for his daughter's future residence in elegant and fashionable style, and the young couple entered on their new sphere of life without a cloud on all its fair horizon.

Several years passed by—years of unalloyed happiness, and then came the first trouble their wedded life had known. This was the sudden death of Dr. Oakley's brother, to whom he had been so long and devotedly attached with more than a brother's love—a death hastened, as he believed, by the total want of comfort in his home; and the thought added to the pangs of bereavement. Anxious thoughts for his brother's orphans now presented themselves—orphans he could not but consider them, more truly so, perhaps, than if death had deprived them of both parents. In six months from her husband's death, the widow was again a bride; and Edward, who had accidentally learned the dissipated habits of the man she now married, became doubly apprehensive for the children's welfare. He knew how their mother's carelessness regarding their mental and moral improvement, as well as their physical well being, had harassed his brother's mind, and often did he imagine him calling to him from the spirit-land, to protect his little children from the danger that threatened them.

In all his perplexities on this subject his warm-hearted wife yielded a ready and sincere sympathy. She had seen her brother-in-law on the occasion of her marriage, and had then been struck by his resemblance to her husband, not

only in outward appearance, but, as far as she could judge, in disposition also. She was quite sure that she could act a mother's part to his children; and Edward had no doubt that their mother would be willing to resign the burden of their charge; but here arose an (apparently) insuperable difficulty.

All his anxiety on the subject could not blind him to the fact, that his slender income was inadequate to the additional expenses which the gratification of his noble plan would occasion. The practice of a young physician in a large city where there are numbers of older and more experienced ones is generally limited; and the remuneration seldom equal to the maintenance of a style which yet it is necessary for him to support. This was the case with Dr. Oakley. By a system of strict management and regularity, Mrs. Oakley had made her husband's limited income suffice, thus far; more than this he could not expect. It was not the expenses of his little nieces' adoption that made him hesitate; but there was another child, a boy of nine years, whom his mother's negligence had suffered to form acquaintance with ill-disposed children, until, fearful of his being led astray by their example, his father had been obliged to send him to a neighboring boarding-school, as the only means of securing for him that watchful care which was so necessary for one of his wild, reckless disposition, which led him to be easily influenced by the example of those with whom he associated. It was the necessity of keeping James at this school that the doctor feared; the high expenses of which, with the additional ones of clothing, &c., made him hesitate before undertaking what perhaps he might be unable to accomplish.

But what is impossible to the resources of a young enthusiastic woman? Mrs. Oakley was by no means deficient in the ready ingenuity of her sex; and when she found her husband reluctantly obliged to defer the prosecution of a plan he had so much at heart, she set herself earnestly to devise ways and means to further the desired end. She instituted a strict search into her household affairs; but here she could discover no means of retrenchment, save in the item of servants' wages. "A cook—a house-maid—a chamber-maid, surely I might dispense with one of them." Once convinced of the possibility of this project, she lost no time in executing it. She dismissed the chamber-maid, recommending her to a person by whom she was at once employed. A few days afterward an acquaintance, whose husband had of late become a millionaire, jestingly asked her if she had any thought of parting with her cook—she was really dying to obtain her. "I thought you were well pleased

with Jane, who has been with you so long," remarked Ellen.

"Oh, she does well enough in general, though I have to purchase all our pastry, and it is very inconvenient—you never can obtain just what you would like at a particular time. Besides, she is not a professed cook, and Mr. ——— often brings gentlemen to dine with us, who are accustomed to French dishes, and then *our* plain fare is so mortifying. But I do not expect you will part with your cook, Mrs. Oakley—there is no such luck for *me* as to get her."

But Mrs. Oakley was by no means so sure. Why would not Jane do as well as the cook whose French dishes were by no means indispensable to the doctor or herself? True, Jane was no pastry-cook; but Mrs. Oakley's mother being a "queer sort of woman," had instructed her in various domestic arts, not at present included in the list of female accomplishments, and she thought but little of this matter. The exchange was made to the satisfaction of all parties. Jane's wages were but half what had been paid to the cook; and now, thought our heroine, my system of retrenchment must end. She, however, the same day, sold her sister her beautiful sitting-room stove which had been so much admired, and was only a year old, and now awaited with a beaming countenance the return of the doctor, that she might surprise him with an account of her successful contrivances. Edward listened with a look of wonder and incredulity; but when she showed him her calculation of the saving in the sum appropriated, semi-annually, for household expenses, and playfully rattled in her purse the *stove money*, which she said would buy some pretty dresses for Fanny and Margaret, he clasped her to his heart, while tears of joy and affection gushed over his manly face. Ellen having previously arranged the necessary things for his departure, joyfully saw him go the next day; and before the close of the week he returned, bringing the little girls, whom, as he had expected, their mother was quite willing to resign to his care. Their brother, whose year at the boarding-school had nearly expired, begged to be allowed to remain till after a little festival, for which the children of the school had been several weeks preparing, and his uncle willingly assented.

Mrs. Oakley received the little orphans with open arms; and finding that their wardrobe was but scantily supplied, immediately purchased the requisite materials, and set about the task which, to one of her disposition, could not be otherwise than a pleasant one. She knew, indeed, nothing of dress-making; but she could not afford to employ a mantua-maker, and it required but little skill to cut dresses for children of four and six.

years. On the morning of the day on which Mrs. Williams made the discovery that so nearly overpowered her sensitive nerves, Dr. Oakley had informed his wife that he would not return home till evening, as he had some distance to ride to meet a gentleman who had promised to take charge of James, and he expected to bring the latter with him to supper. Ellen then determined that on his return the children should appear in their new attire; and Fanny, overjoyed at the thought of seeing James after such a long separation, plied her needle right merrily; while little Margaret longed to say her letters "over and over again," that she might know them to repeat to her Uncle Edward.

At the usual supper hour the doctor appeared, bringing his other protegee; and his wife met him with a smile of eager exultation as she brought forward the little girls in their new black dresses and snowy pantelettes; Fanny, with her beautiful hair released from the stiff, ungraceful plaits, falling in glossy tresses over her fair shoulders—and Margaret's parted smoothly over her white forehead, and falling in a dear little ringlet on either cheek. Their uncle expressed his gratification at their improved appearance; and in his turn presented his nephew to his wife, as a new claimant for her affectionate care. James, who was a very handsome, intelligent-looking boy, returned his aunt's caresses with a warm frankness of manner that delighted her; and the happy family, now complete, took their places at the well-filled board. What a pretty picture they formed—Edward looking with proud satisfaction on his wife, whose beautiful features beamed with delight on thus beholding the complete success of her schemes; while the little children—orphans no longer—returned the love of their adoptive parents with the artless, sincere affection of their age, their eyes fairly dancing with the pleasurable emotions that filled their bosoms as they glanced at each other with bright, joyous smiles.

Mrs. Oakley amused her husband by an account of Mrs. Williams' visit, and the surprise and curiosity that she detected in that lady's looks and restless demeanor; and the doctor could not sufficiently admire his wife, who so cheerfully braved the storm of ridicule, which was sure to ensue from the sacrifices which she had made in behalf of the fatherless little ones.

CHAPTER III.

ERE many days had passed, the circle of Mrs. Oakley's acquaintance was busied in speculating on the causes which had induced such strange and unaccountable conduct. Various were the conjectures respecting it; the majority, however, with Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Lane, deciding

"that it was but sheer meanness and avarice." When after a long time they could discover no farther change—when they found that Mrs. Oakley dressed with her accustomed elegance and taste—that her guests were received and entertained hospitably and cordially as ever—that the children always appeared happy and comfortable—that James went regularly to the best seminary in the city—and what was yet more remarkable, that the doctor and his wife appeared cheerful and contented—why, then they began to think that they had mistaken the motive of her economical arrangements; and they fairly perplexed themselves in the effort to solve the mysterious problem. When at length, one of more wisdom and penetration than the others, ventured to suggest that the doctor might not be so well off as he was thought to be, some indignantly rebuked the idea; while others readily believing it, debated whether they should not "cut" the acquaintance of such "poor, mean sort of people." But, perceiving by indubitable signs, that the Oakleys were destined to "get along" in the world, and would, without doubt, in the end be persons of wealth and consequence, they wisely refrained from taking such a decided step, at least for the present. The discerning few, who had readily divined the motives which actuated Mrs. Oakley, gave her the meed of praise which was justly her due; and her parents, recognizing the happy fruits of their judicious teachings, applauded and encouraged her to persevere.

Unmoved by the cutting and oft-times impertinent remarks, of which good-natured persons took care she should be duly informed, Mrs. Oakley steadily pursued the plan which she had adopted. We do not mean to say that she was altogether indifferent to the ridicule which this excited; probably there is no one so constituted as not to be in some degree sensitive on this point; and hence the moral greatness of the mind which enables one, despite the world's dread laugh and mocking sneer, to enter courageously upon the path of duty; and seeking only "heaven's approval and its own," press firmly and unshrinkingly onward. Mrs. Oakley was such a character. The encouragement and sympathy of her relatives and valued friends were indeed most grateful to her nature; but she felt that even were these withheld, she should not falter nor turn backward.

And oh, how rich, how precious was her reward! When her little nieces, with the gushing affection and artless gratitude of their young hearts, lavished fond caresses on the "dear, sweet aunt," who had indeed proved a mother to them, her bosom thrilled with rapture; and the visible improvement of their brother was a source of deep and unmitigated pleasure. The affection and

gentleness of his aunt brought into action virtues of which, until then, James was not imagined the possessor—under her judicious and watchful care the evil habits he had acquired, more through thoughtlessness and bad example than design, gradually disappeared; while his naturally good principles took deep root and sprang into vigorous maturity. In his studies, also, his progress was rapid and satisfactory. Thus the boy, whose recklessness in childhood had caused his father many an anxious fear, grew up an example of virtue and diligence, respected and confided in on account of the ingenuousness and sincerity which were prominent traits in his character.

Dr. Oakley had, meanwhile, heard several times of his sister-in-law; and the accounts were always of such a nature as to make him rejoice still more that she had no longer the control of his brother's children. Unable to frequent the amusements which were formerly her delight, her time was mostly passed in gossiping visits to those who were willing to cultivate her acquaintance—being herself perfectly indifferent in the selection of her friends—while her husband spent the proceeds of his toil at the tavern, leaving the family to be supported by the store, in which, shortly before his decease, Mr. Oakley had taken his clerk as partner: a lucky arrangement as it proved for the widow, since otherwise the business would have passed into the hands of the worthless, improvident Moore. She had made no attempt to recover the children from their uncle, nor as far as he could learn expressed any uneasiness regarding them. Great, therefore, was his surprise when one day, long after he had ceased to dread her interference, she suddenly presented herself at his office. She seemed fairly overburdened with cheap, tawdry finery, presenting to the doctor a striking exemplification of the influence of low, vulgar associations. Not a lingering trace of refinement or respectability could he discover in the coarse-looking, loud-spoken woman who now imperiously announced her desire of seeing her children, and especially of knowing where she should find her son. Dr. Oakley, as may be supposed, was not over-anxious to satisfy her queries and demands; but he conducted her to his house, which was only a few paces distant, and having introduced her to his wife, awaited with what patience he could command an explanation of this most unexpected visit. He did not long remain in ignorance.

Mrs. Moore came, she told him, partly to see James, who, she supposed, was now quite a man, and remembered nothing of her—but more particularly to take one of his sisters home with her—she had now four children, and the eldest, whom she had calculated on now being of some use, was a bad, wicked boy, who gave her more

trouble than all the rest—so she could not afford to have the two girls, who could be of great help to her, away from home any longer. Fanny was the one she preferred, but if Mrs. Oakley could better spare little Maggie, why, she might, perhaps, do.

The doctor, who had with difficulty kept silent thus far, was now about to speak as his indignant feelings prompted; but his wife's quick tact perceived that this would entirely mar his wishes, and, giving him an expressive glance, she asked Mrs. Moore to come up stairs and lay off her things, and to consider their house her home while she remained in the city. She was sorry that Fanny and Margaret were absent, being on a visit to a friend in the country; but James, she added, would be at supper-time with them, and she doubted not that his mother would be surprised and pleased with his appearance. On returning to the parlor, Mrs. Oakley kindly entered into conversation with her guest respecting her family, business, &c., beguiling the time very pleasantly, much to the astonishment of Mrs. Moore, who had evidently expected a far different reception. The entrance of James, who very much resembled his father, seemed to affect her deeply, and several times during the evening she observed him steadfastly with an expression of sorrow and regret.

The next morning, on descending to the breakfast-room, she surprised the worthy couple by the announcement that she was going home again immediately after breakfast. Mrs. Oakley, finding that such was really her intention, made her a present of a handsome dress pattern which she had purchased for herself a few days previous; and gave her also some money for each of the children, as her sudden departure allowed her no time to buy some little gifts for them as she would wish. Mrs. Moore, after expressing her due appreciation of this kindness, departed highly gratified; leaving her entertainers equally surprised and delighted at her sudden abandonment of her intention regarding "her girls." They never saw her afterward, nor did she make any farther attempt to remove the children from their uncle's home.

CHAPTER IV.

SEVERAL years have glided by, with all their joys and sorrows, their changes and vicissitudes; and now we look upon Mrs. Oakley at a beautiful cottage a few miles from the town, in which her husband is one of the most eminent and successful physicians. Fortune has been no niggard; his residence in town is as elegant and stately as his country-seat is pleasant and cheerful; and there is no wish of his heart ungratified—nothing wanting to render his happiness full and perfect.

With a heart alive as ever to the promptings of kindness and benevolence, he rejoices in the increased capability of doing good which his wealth affords; and many a grateful prayer from the poor and needy—the struggling and unfortunate goes up to the Mercy-seat in his behalf. His nephew, now a fine-looking young man of lofty principles and unblemished character, has already commenced the practice of his uncle's noble profession, with a skill which will soon place him in its foremost ranks. Fanny has married a young farmer in every way worthy of her, whose broad acres Mrs. Oakley can now discern from her cottage door; and Margaret, though many a proud heart has bowed before her fascinations, is still unwon—the light and blessing of her happy home. She is now absent on a visit to her sister, and her brother has gone to bring her back to the home which misses, even for a few days, her playful gayety.

Now, at the quiet evening hour, as Mrs. Oakley sits alone upon the little portico, looking toward the road by which she expects soon to see some loved one approaching, how naturally her mind reverts to scenes long past—how vividly memory recalls the night when the children, who are now her joy and pride, first sat around her fireside—how she smiles as she remembers the sacrifices she made to gather them there—sacrifices which have proved sources of such rich blessings. Aye, memory may dwell fondly on the picture, for no self-accusing thought mars its beauty; and she thinks of that period not with vanity or self-esteem, but with joy and thanksgiving. Lost in these reflections, she had not noticed the tall, noble-looking gentleman who had quietly approached, and now laughingly demanded the cause of her abstraction. When, recovering from the surprise her husband's sudden appearance caused, Mrs. Oakley told him how her mind had been employed, he answered that he, also, had been thinking on the subject. "But has not James yet returned?"

"Not yet," was the reply; and sitting down on the bench beside her, the doctor continued in a tone of much feeling.

"Yes, Ellen, I have been thinking of the generous self-denial by which you enabled me to bring my poor brother's children to our house. All day my thoughts have been recurring to them; for the first paragraph I noticed in this morning's paper showed me how necessary for them, especially for James, was their removal from —, and how much cause both they and we have to bless the hour which saw it effected. Look at this!" and he pointed out in the paper he held in his hand, an account of the arrest of a gang of young burglars who had long infested the town in which Mrs. Moore lived. Amongst

the number was her eldest son, Daniel, whom she had described as a "bad, wicked boy," and who, on account of his extreme youth, had been committed to the House of Refuge immediately after his arrest. Mrs. Oakley shuddered as she read, and drawing closer to her husband, whispered her gratitude for the preservation of their dear nephew from perhaps a similar fate.

"Truly have we cause to rejoice," rejoined the doctor, "for although I can scarcely believe that, under any circumstances, he would have committed this crime, still we know not what might have been the consequence of parental neglect and evil company during the most critical period of his life. But here comes our dear boy—God bless him!" added he, with all a father's affectionate pride. "I hear his voice in the distance." And sure enough, the next moment James approached with both his sisters, all chatting gaily and merrily. Margaret, as soon as she saw the dear, beloved forms on the porch, sprang forward to embrace them, inquiring if they had not sadly missed her, expecting, of course, as her brother said, that her vanity would be gratified by the answer. "And Fanny, too," exclaimed the doctor. "Why, how did you leave Charles so soon?"

"Charles left me," replied the young wife, with a pretty prout of well-feigned vexation; "and I had no intention of remaining in that lonesome house, so I have come to stay with you till he returns."

"Oh, he will return then! He has not left you for good," said the doctor, laughingly.

"But what is the matter, dear aunt?" asked Fanny, anxiously. "I know you have been weeping."

"I have been shedding a few tears, my love, but of joy, not of grief."

"Come, you shall hear the cause after tea," the doctor replied, to their inquiring looks. "You must not keep us old people waiting any longer. I thought to find you here on my return."

"James could not believe it was late, so long as he could look into Julia Lee's eyes; but when they vanished he discovered that it was quite dark," said Margaret, gaily, avoiding at the same time a threatened *pinch* from her brother, by lightly bounding to her proper seat at the table.

When tea was over, Dr. Oakley explained to the eager listeners the circumstances attending their introduction into his household; at which they were all surprised; for that they had ever had a different home was remembered but as a dream by the girls; and James, who well recollected it, knew nothing of the reasons that had induced his uncle to remove them—he knew only that the change was a happy one for them. But now, as he saw among the names of the culprits several

of those who had been his constant companions in childhood, he trembled as he imagined the probability of being implicated in their crime had he not been wisely parted from them. The tears that bedewed his eyes as he joined his sisters in their affectionate embrace of their uncle and aunt, spoke a gratitude deep and fervent without the aid of the words in which he endeavored to thank them. His uncle interrupted him. "It was not to receive your thanks that I thought proper to relate these circumstances to you, my dear children. To me you have been the source of heartfelt happiness; and your aunt will tell you that the efforts she made to have you with us, have been repaid a thousand-fold by your dutiful and affectionate

conduct. But the lesson you may all derive from your personal history I would wish you to remember through life. The path of duty is not often an easy one. Difficulties, discouragements, trials, may meet you on every side—yet if bravely battled with and overcome may open a future of rich, unalloyed enjoyment. Sacrifices painful, though perhaps in themselves trifling, you will be called upon to make—you will experience difficulty where you least expect it, and, above all, that cowardly fear of censure and ridicule which hinder the performance of many a noble deed—yet all these must disappear before a firm, heroic purpose; and remember also, that the path of duty, if it has its difficulties and sacrifices, has also pleasures and rewards."